

I Made a Rock Video

Video

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Beta Results Are In

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MARCH 1985

The #1 Magazine of Home Video


How to Make Money With Your Camera

Antique TVs
The New Collectibles

Good Grief!
Peanuts on Tape

BERGER-BRAITHWAITE VIDEOTESTS
Polaroid 8mm Camcorder System
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The new Pioneer® CLD-900 will play CD discs digitally. It will play conventional laser videodiscs with analogue sound. And it'll play the new-generation laser videodiscs with digital sound. It is clearly the most versatile audio/video system yet devised.

Given all this versatility, it's easy to assume we've made some kind of compromise. How could one player possibly be the best at all these things? Better, in fact, than if it did one thing alone?

Believe it or not, the new Pioneer CLD-900 LaserDisc™ brand videodisc player is better at everything. Without any question. And for a very simple reason.

The precision and sensitivity required to make a great LaserDisc player is far greater than what's required to make a CD player. (The laser beam itself must focus 20-25% more accurately on an LV disc than on a CD disc.)

Because of this precision, the CD portion of our new combo player offers superb specs: a frequency response of 5 Hz-20 KHz, an S/N ratio and dynamic range of 96 dB, and a separation of 94 dB.

And it comes as no surprise that, by adding digital sound to the laser picture, LV sound is, as *Video Magazine* reports, "the best available in a home video-plus audio system."

As everyone knows, a CD disc is physically very different from an LV disc. So how do you create a player that reads both so well? That wasn't easy.

First, we gave our new CLD-900 two distinct motors: one for CD, another higher-torque motor for LV. (We could have made a player with one motor and a lot of gears, but that would have been a compromise.) And we mounted these motors in an aluminum frame

independent from the cabinet.

Next, we gave our combo player 6 separate servos. (CD players have at best 3 or 4.) We even added a separate servo to compensate for warped discs, something that no CD player has ever had.

Since stability is of such consequence in a laser system, we gave our player the largest, most stable clamping system yet devised. Substantially larger than the clamping system on any CD.

And to ensure that none of this quality is lost, we built our player with unprecedented quality. Ours is the first to employ oxygen-free copper cables in the circuitry itself. As well as gold-plated connectors.

For all its technical advances, the CLD-900 is childishly simple to use. One remote control controls both CD and LV functions. And sensors in the system automatically set the player for either LV or CD discs. All you do is put the disc on the tray, slide it in, and press "Play." As *Video Magazine* put it, "It could become simpler only by accepting voice commands...."

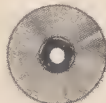
The Pioneer CLD-900 costs more than CD players. It costs more than conventional laser-videodisc players. But since it's clearly the best at everything, shouldn't it?



The 12" Standard Videodisc



The 8" Music Videodisc.



The Compact Audiodisc.



PIONEER
Video for those
who really care about audio.



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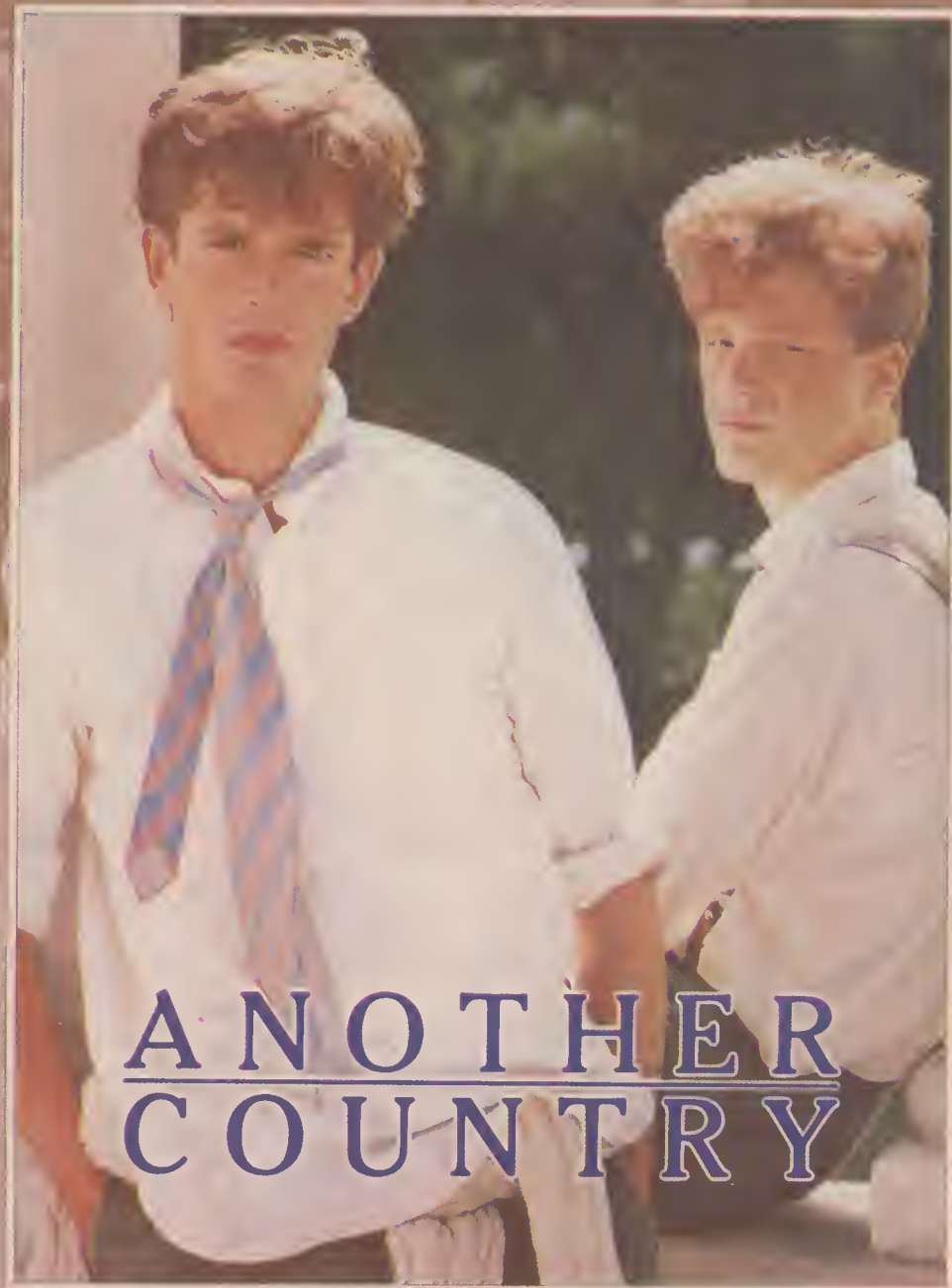
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Channel One

Giving Something Back

One of the horrors of human existence inescapably flooded American living-rooms during the last quarter of 1984. It was painful to watch on newscasts, but even more painful to ignore. The famine in Ethiopia reminded most of us how fragile, unpredictable, and unfair life is. It is incredible to think that there was rampant starvation in one corner of the planet while in another people dined rapturously on fat turkeys.

We here at VIDEO don't mean to depress you. There is a point we'd like to make. Believe it or not, the Boomtown Rats and Boy George have something to do with helping the undernourished. Not everyone in the rock-music business or video industry ignored the people in Ethiopia. Two companies immediately come to mind: Vestron and Media Home Entertainment. One editor received a Christmas card that had the classiest message of any of the hundreds we received. It said, "In expression of our gratitude for our business association, Media Home Entertainment has made a contribution to CARE on your behalf. This donation will aid hunger victims in Ethiopia."

Vestron, as you probably know by now, went all out. It produced a video called "Do They Know It's Christmas?," based on the hit 45 of the same name. The idea was simple. Everyone involved donated time and resources to aid the desperately needy. Vestron got artists, duplicators, wholesalers, retailers, and vendors to get the 30-minute stereo videocassette out during the holiday season. Because everyone donated so generously, the tape sold for \$9.95. All the proceeds go to the Band Aid Fund which supports famine victims in Ethiopia. If you bought a tape, we salute you, as we are proud to salute Austin Furst and Jon Peisinger of Vestron.

One editor here was also moved by Vestron's leadership role. He sent a check to the fund while happily ignoring his alma mater's pleas for donations to build yet another building. For one small moment, he felt he had his priorities straight.

Speaking of rock video, this month we bring you a not-always-affectionate memoir of Michael Musto's attempt at making one on his own. What struck us about the piece is that Musto, a gossip columnist for *The Village Voice*, had a miniscule budget. It's not what we'd call your typical service article, but we're sure you'll be able to read between the lines for some solid advice (which is: you don't want to get involved).

For those who insist on dreaming of turning their avocation into a vocation, our lead feature this month comes in three parts. In one story, we explain how you can make money with your video camera. In another, a network producer tells you how to sell your hot news footage to local stations and beyond. And we have a short profile of one man who realized the dream: he parlayed his half-inch tape into becoming a millionaire.

Meanwhile, there's a lot of other noteworthy footage reviewed in this issue, and the themes of the month are romantic comedy (Mark Fleischmann on Ernst Lubitsch's *Ninotchka*: "modern restraint is no substitute for good old-fashioned repression") and gore (Harvey Elliott on Herschell Gordon Lewis' *Blood Feast*: "if you think Steven Spielberg was the first director to yank a beating heart out of a man's chest, think again"). You figure it.

March's "Video Clips" column is devoted almost exclusively to classic broadcast-TV series brought to tape. (Yes, we do watch some television.) Louise Kohl says of *Upstairs, Downstairs*, "If this isn't the way the Victorian age really was, it's probably the way it should have been." The section's centerpiece is by M. George Stevenson, who viewed all 17 available episodes of Patrick McGoochan's *The Prisoner* and concludes it is "television art at its best, its very best. No other broadcast series has so consistently challenged one's intellectual and moral sense while also remaining entertaining."

See, we do like some things. We're just picky, that's all.

—The Editors

video

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Completing the package is TDK's cassette shell mechanism engineered to tolerances 2½ times the industry standard for consistent tracking stability, reliability and durability. You're assured optimum performance levels. Even in demanding slower speed modes.

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Don't just tape it. TDK it.

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How were HD-Pro's superior signal-to-noise ratios achieved? By further refining our already world-renowned Super Avilyn particles. HD-Pro's microfine particles are less jagged, smoother, and so much smaller than any other tape particles that TDK's engineers were able to pack them together nearly 12 times more densely than even our Standard Reference tape.

The results? A dropout ratio that beats the competition—and unequalled performance for you. But TDK didn't stop there. TDK's improved High Density/Durability (HDD) binder system combined with an ultra-smooth film base assures you of consistent professional-quality viewing, play after play.

To virtually eliminate all jitter and skewing problems, TDK packages this outstanding premium tape in its own precision SQ cassette shell mechanism for optimum tape transport, tracking and alignment. And to protect the tape from dust and damage, TDK houses HD-Pro in a distinctive, hard plastic library case.

If you're among the most discriminating videophiles—and you are if you've read this far—you owe it to yourself to try TDK's EHG or new HD-Pro.

Both tapes available in VHS and Beta formats

Fast Forward

Late-Breaking News

Video Futures

A new generation of "Super Beta" VCRs will arrive here by next fall—probably long before VHS decks of similar quality are available. A Sony spokesman said the new VCRs will provide "a significantly sharper, more detailed picture than conventional Beta-format VCRs."

The super decks' re-recording system will shift the carrier-signal frequency 800kHz higher, for wider luminance bandwidth. The result—a 20 percent gain in sharpness, about 300 lines of horizontal resolution. Initial rumors had given the new decks an even greater resolution advantage—as high as 400 lines. But a video expert expressed the belief that Sony would have had to sacrifice compatibility with current VCRs to make that radical an improvement.

Sony spokesmen insist that Super Beta will be completely compatible with conventional Beta decks: "Tapes recorded on Super Beta can play back on conventional Beta recorders and vice versa."

Aiwa, NEC, Pioneer, Sanyo, Teknika, and Toshiba will all have Super Betas for sale this year.

Meanwhile, back in VHS land, JVC doesn't claim its new camcorder qualifies as Super VHS; but it is better than before. The new all-in-one uses the same old 20-minute VHS-C cassette, but improved technology now delivers a high-quality picture at the slowest speed, so recording time will be stretched to an hour. Our technical editors are

eagerly—and skeptically—awaiting their first look at the wonder-camcorder.

Broadcast Barons

If you want to own lots and lots of TV or radio stations, you *can* go on a shopping spree. Last summer the FCC abolished the old "7-7-7" rule which said owners could not hold more than 7 TV, AM, or FM radio stations, and raised the new limit to 12 of each.

There was a public outcry over the danger that bigger conglomerates would decrease broadcast competition—and thus widen the electronic wasteland. Congressional pressure forced a temporary tabling of the new rules. But the elections are over, and modifications of the 12-12-12 regulations seem to have satisfied our politicians.

The most important change says no single owner can serve more than 25 percent of America's TV homes. But some critics say the new rules leave buyers with lots of room to wheel and deal and clutter our screens. (See "Off the Air" for more on 12-12-12.)

Scramble Movement

Elsewhere in the issue Ken Winslow predicts that other pay services will soon join HBO in scrambling their satellite feeds ("News & Views"). How right he is—Showtime/Movie Channel has just announced plans to scramble by summer, using the same technical system as HBO. So far, neither service has announced any DBS plans concerning the 600,000-plus U.S. satellite-dish owners, but the company

that makes the scrambling device says it's ready, willing, and able to sell decoders to consumers—whenever the pay services ask it to do so.

Shlock Lobster

Score one for the folks who are doing their level best to make home video every bit as objectionable as network TV. Commercials have been inching onto prerecorded tapes for some time—"coming attractions" trailers are nothing less. Now Chelsea Communications is going a step further with its new *Eat to Win* video, a fitness and nutrition tape based on the bestselling book. The tape is sponsored by Red Lobster Inns and the chain will be hawking its high-cholesterol butter-drenched entrees through "tasteful" plugs on the packaging and at the program's start and finish.

Double Decker II

Pioneer is so pleased with its LV/CD player that it has decided to try another video/audio combo: an 8mm video deck with separate digital audio capability. The 2-way machine, due here by the fall, will record up to 9 hours of digital audio on a 90-minute videocassette. Also due from Pioneer: a midrange LV player with a list price of \$400.

What Price Blank?


It's famine in the midst of feast for the blank-tape industry. Sales are booming, with record numbers of cassettes being sold to consumers and duplicators. But undercutting

and other forms of price war mean that smart shoppers can find great deals aplenty on blank tape—and that manufacturers are hard-pressed to turn a profit. How low can tape prices go? The value of the raw materials in a cassette box provides one measure. The polyester in a T120 costs about 40 cents, and the oxide tape coating another 15 cents.

Marching to Stereo

The networks are rubbing their hands with glee—and cable subscribers may soon be happy too. The FCC seems ready to drag the cable companies kicking and screaming into the stereo revolution. "Must carry" rules, stating that cable companies have to offer customers the entirety of a TV broadcast signal, will probably be enforced in the near future. There will be exceptions—in cable systems where it would cost too much to upgrade to MTS—and probably a grace period of several years. But recent indications that many cable companies can convert to stereo ("Fast Forward," February 1985) may be influencing the FCC to give cable operators a helpful boot in the right direction.

Tilting Teletext

Farewell to another video service whose time never came. NBC Teletext attracted fewer than 200 subscribers, and has closed its doors. The lack of affordable in-home decoders was cited as the major reason for the service being banished to the high shelf—somewhere between the Edsel and the CED. 



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JVC introduces the video camera with a VHS tape deck built right in.

It's the biggest advance in movie-making since the talkies.

JVC® presents the VideoMovie—the first video camera for home use that has its own VHS video deck in one self-contained unit.

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To make it all possible, JVC had to invent a

whole new kind of VHS—a special cassette that snaps into the back of the VideoMovie camera. With the adapter, it can be played on any VHS-format VCR.

Unlike other camcorder formats, VideoMovie can plug right into your TV set for playback without any other equipment. We even give you the cable to do it. And we're sure you'll find the picture quality absolutely superb.

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Check out the VideoMovie at your nearest JVC dealer. We've put movie-making right in your hands.

VideoMovie
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Feedback

Readers Air Their Views

Beta'd Traps

First I would like to address Roderick Woodcock's laughable dubbing test in "TV Den" ["Which Format Dubs It Best?", November 1984]. The only redeeming feature was the counterpoint by Lan-celot Braithwaite. The entire premise of this "test" is ludicrous. All that was proven is that if you are stupid enough to go to fifth-generation dubbing, regardless of format, you will get the poor results that such actions deserve. Admittedly, Beta outperformed VHS in this test, but in turn you must admit that neither format produced acceptable results. Woodcock's test has all the validity of the cyclamate tests in which test animals were given amounts of the substance far beyond what a human would consume under any circumstances. Unrealistic tests provide unreliable results and faulty conclusions.

Next I would like to address the article by Carlisle E. Moody Jr. ["Beta Is Cheaper—Sometimes," November 1984], in which he concluded that Beta is cheaper than VHS. To reach this conclusion he made one major arbitrary decision: to compare the VHS SP speed to Beta's BII. When VIDEO has previously addressed the issue of video quality, SP beat BII by a slight margin, and BII in turn beat LP by a slight margin. Contrary to Moody's statements, many people I know (myself included) use LP for a good compromise between picture quality and tape economy. The LP speed has gotten the short end of the stick largely because one manufacturer (JVC) and the brands for

which it makes VCRs have chosen to omit LP recording capacity. Matsushita, the largest supplier of VHS units, has continued to back LP, as have many VHS users. Comparing LP to BII results—a \$2-per-hour figure for LP versus \$2.67 for BII—makes VHS the clear victor in both the faster and slower speeds. This gives the VHS owner two options: slightly higher quality and tape costs than with BII, or slightly lower quality and tape costs than BII.

The other critical factor in the article's conclusions is the lower cost of Beta recorders. Indeed, Beta did resort to drastic cuts earlier than VHS; the Beta camp had to do *something* to compete with the overwhelming success of VHS. However, VHS recorders become cheaper every day. In my area you can get a 4-head Zenith with 14/4 programming for \$479, and entry-level units from Panasonic and TMK for \$349. The cheapest Beta units I have seen go for around \$329. So much for Beta's price superiority.

Why must there be a winner anyway? Both formats can coexist. I'm so convinced of this that my next major purchase will be a Beta Hi-Fi recorder. I need a second recorder, would like to have Hi-Fi, and feel that if I have two recorders, I should avail myself of both formats. If my existing VCR were a Beta, I would buy a VHS Hi-Fi. It's so much easier to be open-minded about these things.

Douglas S. Raeburn
Menomonee Falls, Wis.

About Roderick Woodcock's "Which Format Dubs It Best?": If ever I wanted Beta to look better than VHS I would certainly use your setup—that is, two brand-new top-of-the-line Sony Betas versus one older and one new Quasar VHS. Aw, come on! And you had the nerve to use Sony tape and a Sony monitor too. You must think your readers are total idiots. If Beta were as good as you'd like to claim, you sure went to a lot of trouble to fix the results. You never showed what the original test pattern looked like before any recording (both the Beta and VHS looked lousy to me). By the way, did you end up with five tapes or did you use two tapes over and over again? Why didn't you use Fuji tape with the Sony or Sony tape with the Quasar? (Ha, ha.) I suggest a fairer test that would have some merit. I always thought Beta was better at recording, but now—hmmmm. Is this a coverup or poetic blundering?

Chuck Cooper
Merrimack, N.H.

Sounds Good to Me

I take issue with John Francis and Roderick Woodcock's conclusions on using Hi-Fi video machines as audio-only recorders ["Hi-Fi Standoff," December 1984]: They say the idea isn't good, but I say it is.

I bought a Sony SL-5200 when it first came out in summer 1983. I have used it ever since in making both videotapes and audio-only recordings. The Beta Hi-Fi outperforms both of my semi-pro open-reel machines and is

vastly superior to any audio-cassette recording. I have had virtually no dropouts on the Hi-Fi audio, and I use standard-grade videotape. I do find it necessary to use Beta II speed, though, as I would normally get some mis-tracking (a half-dozen times in 4-1/2 hours) when using Beta III. But even this is almost always overcome on playback by simply adjusting the tracking control. Out of a couple of hundred hours of recording, I have had only two instances, using standard-grade tape, of a dropout that would cause the machine to switch down to the standard mono audio track. In each instance the duration was only a few seconds. Now I often get L-750s for \$5 and \$6, so even at the fast speed that comes to less than \$2 an hour—far cheaper than open-reel and comparable with good-quality audio cassettes.

I don't agree with your authors' other complaints. I have a CD machine and it sounds incredible, so it makes no difference to me if there is a sharp cutoff above 20,000 Hz. Maybe my dog would mind, but I haven't asked him. I have heard absolutely no coloring of sound by the preemphasis circuits. The authors make it sound as if this format were less pure than others. Nonsense. I don't care if they run the sound through ten thousand circuits; as long as the end result sounds like what you fed into the machine, you should be more than pleased. Improper use of a limiter can hurt the sound; well, I



GX-N7

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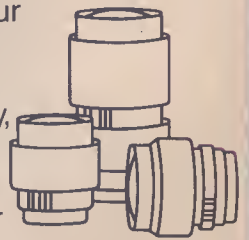
At just 2.4 pounds, the camera fits into the palm of your hand. But the GX-N7 puts more fully automated features in your hands than any other camera we've ever made.



For instance, it has through-the-lens auto-focusing with virtually no parallax error. And Auto Color Tracking that eliminates the need for white balance adjustment. With the optional character

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The GX-N7 can record sound in stereo, and with its low light sensitivity, you'll even be able to shoot night games. It has a 6X power zoom lens, and can also accept lenses from your 35mm SLR.* So you can shoot anything from super telephoto to macro videos.



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agree with that, but improper use of anything can damage a recording. So what?

The only disadvantage of Beta Hi-Fi over open-reel recording is that you cannot make flying starts or perfect edits; you're always going to have to wait a couple of seconds for the recording to kick in. But to repeat, the proof is in the listening, and I have tested Hi-Fi recordings on nitpicky musicians. They were unable to tell the Hi-Fi dub from the original tape. Isn't that what it's all about?

Paul Loeber
Mansfield, Ohio

I appreciate your December article on VHS versus Beta Hi-Fi. It answered some of the questions I had concerning my new Magnavox VHS Hi-Fi VCR. I don't have a CD player, but I did run some tests which showed some of the results you came up with. My deck generates a slight amount of noise in the left channel which gets worse at the slower speeds and with lower-grade tape. I even took the deck in to be serviced but found no appreciable change when I got it back. After reading your suggestions on tape and speed, I ran some more tests and my results agree with yours. I realize now that the VHS Hi-Fi sound isn't perfect and that the things I noticed aren't the exception. But Hi-Fi audio is still a great improvement over the old longitudinal Dolby stereo, especially at low speeds. I guess I'll be

looking for high-grade tape on sale from now on.
Les Whiteside
Mesa, Ariz.

South of the Raster

Spanish-language films are notable by their absence from VIDEO. One issue barely mentioned is a company importing Mexican films for tape distribution in the U.S., but the only one I've seen listed is *The Pearl*, starring Pedro Amadoriz, without doubt one of the classics from below the border.

At one time Mexico was the second-largest movie producing country, after Japan and before the United States. Many of its productions are worthy of



international tape distribution and will hold up against, and often surpass, listed films from other countries that are regarded as "classic." With a built-in audience of millions of Spanish-speaking citizens in the U.S., the majority Mexican-Americans, I am surprised more of the better Mexican films are not offered on tape for that vast audience, not to mention non-Spanish-speaking collectors.

Cantinflas, for instance—the best known comedian worldwide next to Chaplin (though grossly mishandled in his two Hollywood films), whose antics are known to an audience far surpassing the population of Tio Sam—has yet to be offered to the home-viewing audience.

Shouldn't negotiations with this great comedian be opened?

I admit some of the worst films I've seen were produced in Mexico; but at the same time I'll split that accolade with the United States and England. Still, many overdone English-language turkeys are offered on tape and disc while the best of Mexico is completely ignored. Mexican films would certainly sprout another branch on home video's tree if offered. *Porque no?*

San Jorge Cocinero
Guadalajara, Jalisco
Mexico

Voicing Objections

I was shocked at the implausible error you let Lorenzo Carcaterra print in the November 1984 "People" column—that Frank Sinatra is set to start filming *Suddenly*. Sinatra starred in *Suddenly* when it was first released in 1954. The film was released on videocassette a while back.

Charles Pignone
Latham, N.Y.

Carcaterra replies: Sources close to Sinatra tell me he's considering doing a remake of Suddenly. If they're wrong, I apologize for the error. If they're right, remember you read it here first.

William A. Marsano's "Pies in the Sky" [January 1985] was inaccurate. The in-



RCA offers a full line of VHS and Beta tapes in a variety of lengths, including super high grade—for pictures that are brighter and clearer than ever. When you're playing for keeps, insist on RCA Video Tape.

RCA
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For additional information,
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THE GREATEST FILM OF ALL TIME IS NOW FOR SALE

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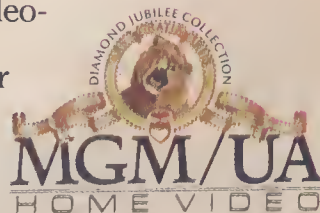
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* Closed caption
by NCI



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For additional information, circle No. 17 on Reader Service Card.

Feedback

correct information he used from Bob Brewin's *Village Voice* column was corrected by Brewin in a later issue of the *Voice*.

Marsano's reference to a September subscriber count of 2000 is simply wrong. I have no idea where he got this figure. When he asked me for a figure I did not respond as quoted—I told him 10,000. Evidently he preferred the other number. I spent some time explaining to Marsano that though we did not have a big problem with churn, it had no real

meaning yet. As our service was so new and the purchase price significant, we thought it was much too early to make a judgment about churn, but Marsano preferred to quote me as pontificating "there is no churn in DBS."

As Marsano had no interest in the facts that we gave him, it is offensive to include us in his piece. He clearly came to interview USCI to be able to assume the journalistic posture of having been "investigative." It's an insult to reporters who do their jobs well as well as an insult

to us.

Edina Gillmor
Director of Public Affairs
United Satellite Communications Inc.
New York

Marsano replies: Bob Brewin may have corrected himself, but an RCA service executive confirmed, quite clearly, that installation took far longer and cost far more than expected. Gillmor tries to downplay churn by saying it shouldn't be discussed when USCI had been on the air for only a month. But when I spoke to her, USCI had been on the air ten months and was in extreme financial difficulty. At that point, the question did have "real meaning" and it was not "much too early to make a judgement" about it. Churn after all effects income as well as attempts to raise investment capital. Both of which USCI needed.

Something strange jumped onto the paper with respect to my quote in December 1984's "Stereo Unready" article. The word "only" should read "a minimum of one station..." I am pleased, though, to have contributed to a very interesting story. Thanks.

Jesse Maxenchs
Marketing Manager,
Broadcast Products
Urban Associates
San Francisco

Although I enjoy the great many products and innovations that come from Japan, it has recently been brought to my attention that Japan is a pirate whaler. It has been recognized as committing international criminal acts by refusing to abide by the International World Court's ruling to stop killing the earth's great whales. It has encouraged a few other countries to keep their whale-killing activities going. After seeing such a civilized industrial country act in such an arrogant manner, I have reluctantly refused to buy or use any product from this country. Being a video nut, this will be hard to do. I realize, though, that living beings come before my video monitors and VCRs.

Theodore Plottner
Meeker, Okla.

Erratum

December's "Feedback" column incorrectly listed the Video Software Dealers Association hotline with a local area code, whereas it should have been given with an 800 code. The correct number is 1-800-257-5259. We regret the error.

VIDEO welcomes your comments and questions. Due to the volume of mail we receive, however, it is not possible to send personal replies; please do not include self-addressed envelopes with letters. All letters published may be edited for clarity and space. Address correspondence to **Feedback, VIDEO Magazine**, 460 West 34th Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.

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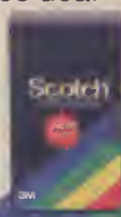
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For additional information, circle No. 19 on Reader Service Card.

New Products



Sanyo VCR7500

Sanyo Delivers VCR7500, A New Beta Hi-Fi Baby

The VCR 7500 is the second tabletop Beta Hi-Fi VCR from Sanyo. It adds the attraction of Multichannel TV Sound (MTS) receiving capability in the tuner section, plus audio dubbing, to add a new soundtrack without disturbing the video signals on a tape.

Other features include 13-function wireless remote control, 14-day/8-event programmable recording, one-button recording, choice of auto/manual recording-level control, auto rewind, and a five-motor drive mechanism.

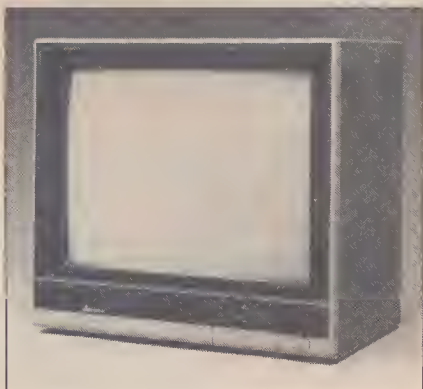
Price: \$749.95.

For additional information,
circle No. 152 on Reader Service Card.

Mitsubishi 20-Incher Has All the Goodies

Mitsubishi's CS-2061R is a 20-inch monitor/receiver with all the extras: flat-square screen, broadcast stereo reception, and full-function remote control.

Included among the audio-related con-



18 Video

trols are Stereo Blend, Loudness compensation, Bass and Treble (separate controls), plus stereo audio inputs, variable outputs, and external speaker terminals. Bass response is enhanced by a rear-mounted woofer, in addition to two high-frequency drivers in front. An audio-expansion circuit simulates stereo from non-stereo broadcasts or other mono sources.

The 139-channel cable-ready set has two tuning features: Channel Memory, which erases channels from the tuning sequence when they are not desired or not in use in your area, and Quick View, which switches directly back to the last channel in use to allow easy monitoring of two programs at once. Naturally, the unit comes with a video input and output.

Price: \$820.

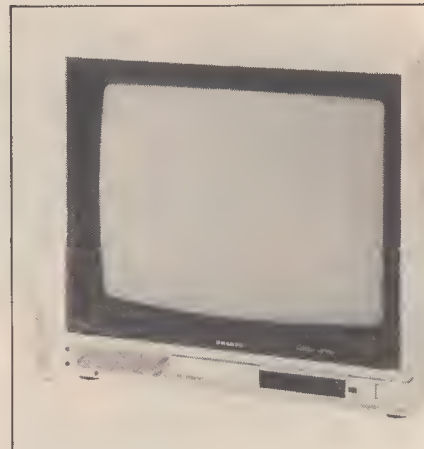
For additional information,
circle No. 153 on Reader Service Card.

Sanyo Monitor/Receiver Is Ready For Off-Air Stereo

The AVM260 is a 25-inch "Pro-Ponent" monitor/receiver from Sanyo.

This unit is ready for the advent of broadcast stereo, with its built-in adapter to decode the signal and its built-in two-channel 3.6-watt audio amp. Bilingual capability is included. It also has a 112-channel tuner, 180-button infrared remote control, one-button color setting, video and audio jacks for optimum signal input from VCRs or disc players, stereo headphone jack, "solar tune" circuitry to adjust brightness to ambient room light, and an LED channel display.

Price: to be announced.



Sanyo AVM260

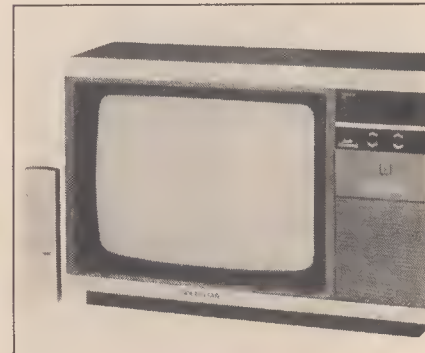
For additional information,
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GoldStar to Sell 3 Low-Priced Color TVs

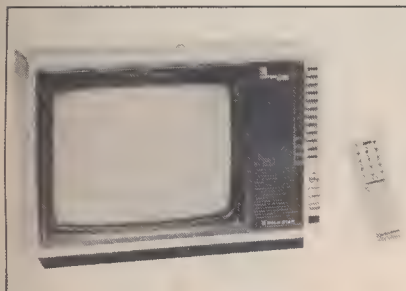
Color TV at a reasonable price is the name of GoldStar's game, and three new models are out from the manufacturer. All have 13-inch screens.

The most deluxe model is the CMT-4165, which has 133-channel frequency-synthesized direct-access tuning, full-function remote control, auto brightness control, LED channel display, channel search and lock, and auto picture control. The CMZ-4122, with a new type of chassis, has auto color and gain control, and the chassis guarantees lower power consumption. Rotary tuning still holds sway on the CMX-4120—but then, it's the lowest-priced of the three. It still has auto color and gain control.

Prices: CMT-4165, \$399.95; CMZ-4122, \$349.95; CMX-4120, \$279.95.



Goldstar CMT-4165



Goldstar CMZ-4122



Goldstar CMX-4120

For additional information,
circle No. 155 on Reader Service Card.

Viditek Thinks 'Big' With Monitor, Accessories

Viditek, known for its small video accessories, is adding larger items to its line of gear.

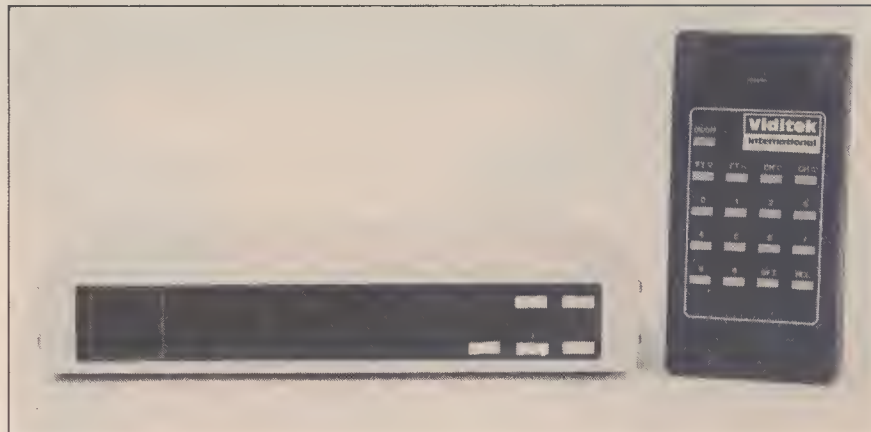
Most notable is the 14-inch color monitor, model MTR014, with its 350-line screen. It uses a composite video signal and comes in a grey cabinet.

The STV600 converts cable channels between 2 and 60 to a fixed-output Channel 3. This remote-controlled frequency-synthesizer converter has a "daily memory" in the RAM of its microcomputer, which can store up to six channel numbers including fine-tuning information. The tuner automatically goes into standby mode if the line voltage disappears, then recovers. The unit is connected with 75-ohm cable and F connectors.

Also available are two new switchers from Viditek. The APT86, when used with two SB63E switchers, connects four TVs, two VCRs, a game, computer, videodisc player, satellite antenna,



Viditek MTR014



Viditek STV600

regular antenna, and cable or other pay-TV connection. The SSV440 is not an RF switcher, like the APT86, but an electronic matrix unit that switches any of four inputs to any four outputs.

Prices: all open-list.

For additional information,
circle No. 156 on Reader Service Card.

Recoton Box Improves The Sound of Things

Not satisfied with the sound coming out of your audio/video system? There really isn't much you can do, but what you can do can be done with Recoton's V618 Stereo Simulator Amplifier.

It combines stereo-simulation circuitry—not so good for headphone listening, but it fills loudspeakers with ambience lacking in the original source material—with a noise-reduction circuit. Noise reduction is a must with mono VCRs, and even Dolby VHS stereo units can benefit from it sometimes. (Hi-Fis are another story.) This unit uses the



Recoton V618 (top); Recoton V615

DNR (Dynamic Noise Reduction) principle, which allows loud volume levels to "mask" high-frequency noise, but introduces itself when the level drops and hiss would be more noticeable.

LEDs show left and right volume levels. The 4.5-watt amplifier is good for use with small loudspeakers; the manufacturer recommends its own SM-200 Mini-Speakers, included with the V619.

Prices: V618, \$144.95; V619, \$279.95.

For additional information,
circle No. 157 on Reader Service Card.

Recoton Unveils All-in-One Picture Processor

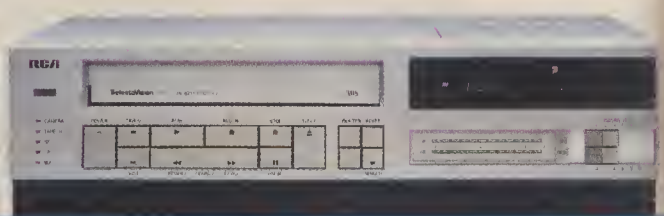
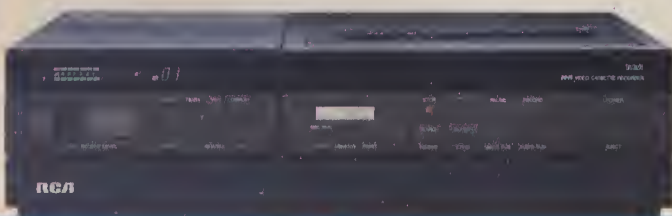
If you do a lot of editing or dubbing, you may be interested in the Recoton V615 color processor/enhancer/distribution amplifier, which (obviously) combines several picture-related functions into one unit.

To the right of its Luminance Level needle indicator, the controls start with a four-position switch that turns the unit on and off, selects Color or B/W processing (depending on your source material), and allows Bypass—so you can check the original signal against the enhanced one. The Gain control allows both fades-in/out and adjustment of the contrast in the picture. Two Chroma controls adjust the amount of Color and type of Tint. Finally, the Detail knob adjusts the amount of sharpness in the picture; for a clean source you might want it turned up all the way, but a noisy source might look better more soft-

V

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For more information write: RCA Consumer Electronics, Dept. 32-312GG, P.O. Box 7036, Indianapolis, IN 46207-7036.

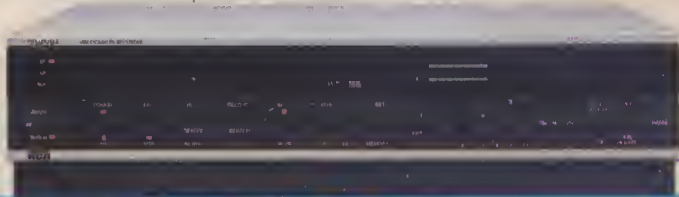
RCA

TECHNOLOGY THAT EXCITES THE SENSES.

*RCA Hi-Fi VCRs (except VKT 550 and VKT 650) can record stereo TV broadcast, where available, with the use of an optional decoder.

Models pictured below from left to right: VKP 950, VKT 550, VKT 650, VKT 700.

For additional information, circle No. 20 on Reader Service Card.



O V C R

New Products

focused.

The unit contains one video input and four outputs, so you can make up to four copies of the source at once. A built-in RF converter lets you improve playback of tapes to be merely watched, not re-recorded.

Price: \$329.95.

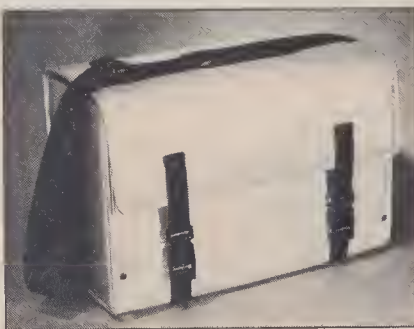
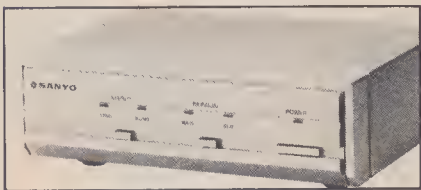
For additional information,
circle No. 158 on Reader Service Card.

Sanyo Makes Add-On MTS Stereo Adapter

Owners of Sanyo 19-inch 91C555, 91C601, 91C621, and 258 colors TVs, take note: multichannel TV sound (MTS) is available via the Sanyo MSA 100 MTS adapter. The unit works in conjunction with the audio-in jacks on the rear of the sets to deliver two-channel sound, plus bilingual capability. The adapter is connectable with RCA phono-type cords.

Price: to be announced.

For additional information,
circle No. 159 on Reader Service Card.



Coast Mfg. Case Houses Beta and VHS Camcorders

Camcorder users have a new way to transport their equipment, compliments of Coast Manufacturing Co. The VC-80, with its durahyde skin and metallic silver finish, is a fully padded carry case with adjustable divider, and accommodates either the Sony (Sanyo, NEC) Betamovie or JVC's VHS VideoMovie.

There's plenty of room in the wall compartment for spare batteries, power adapters, lens accessories, and the like. The case, which measures 15 by 10 by 8 inches, has a nonabrasive lining that is kind to everything. Its two-inch shoulder straps are made of sturdy polypropylene, and reinforced seams and metal-rivet construction make it sturdy enough

for heavy-duty use. Five metal-ball feet protect the bottom.

Price: \$89.

For additional information,
circle No. 160 on Reader Service Card.

Electronic Specialists Device Says, Do Not Disturb

To protect your video or audio equipment from damage inflicted by power-line surges or other irregularities, consider the Isolator ISO-4, which acts as an electronic buffer to shield protected equipment from even momentary power-line disruptions.

Price: \$85.

For additional information,
circle No. 161 on Reader Service Card.



WHO

(IS OUT TO STUMP THE WORLD'S TOP SLEUTHS?)

WHAT

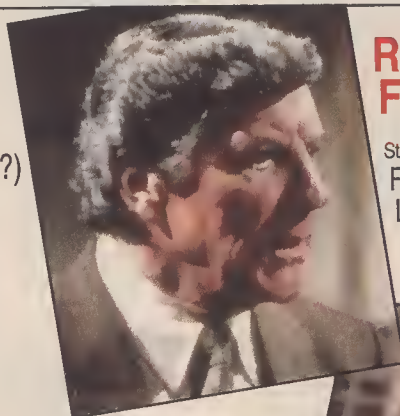
(SURPRISES DO THEY HAVE IN STORE?)

WHEN

(WILL THE MOTIVES BE UNCOVERED?)

WHERE

(WILL YOU FIND THE ANSWERS?)



REHEARSAL FOR MURDER

Starring
Robert Preston
Lynn Redgrave
Patrick McNee

PRIME SUSPECT

Starring
Mike Farrell
Teri Garr



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For additional information, circle No. 22 on Reader Service Card.


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Rex Reed, New York Post

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PANGAEA CORPORATION PRODUCTION
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For additional information, call No. 23 on Reader Service Card.



JESSICA LANGE
is Jewell Ivy
SAM SHEPARD
is Gil Ivy



TOUCHSTONE
HOME VIDEO

Fine Tuning

Your Video Questions Answered

by Roderick Woodcock

Better Red Than...

Q Whenever I record something off TV with my VCR, it seems that the reds appear to streak and run horizontally throughout the picture. It's especially noticeable when I record at the slowest speed. What causes this?

James Sakamoto
Gardena, Cal.

A The colors of the spectrum all have specific frequencies. Of those in the visible spectrum—ranging from red to violet—red has the highest frequency and is the most difficult for a VCR to record.

Hi-Fi-Bars

Q I've got a Sony SL-5000 Beta VCR and a newer SL-2710 machine, which has Beta Hi-Fi. Normally, the tapes made on one machine play back very well on the other deck, with little or no tracking adjustments necessary. Normally, I just use the SL-5000 as a recording deck and play back all my tapes on the SL-2710 since it has the cordless remote control. However, the one or two times I've used the 5000 as a player, I've noticed that the Hi-Fi tapes made on the 2710 look different. For example, when I scan through the tapes, noisebars appear black rather than white. Also, the overall picture quality is grainier compared to when the tape is played back on the 2710. I've had my Hi-Fi machine for nearly a year now

and am convinced that I'm not just seeing things. Have you observed any similar effects?

Dale Leonhardt
New York, N.Y.

A Yes. The "black noise-bar" effect you describe does exist and is most pronounced when scanning through tapes recorded at the BII speed, where the noise-bars are wider than at the BIII speed. The "grainy" picture effect you've encountered also exists but is harder to detect, and is influenced by the type of TV and how its controls are adjusted.

Both effects are attributable to the presence of the Beta Hi-Fi audio subcarriers mixed in with the video signal recorded on the Hi-Fi tape. Generally, I don't find this a problem since I generally use my Hi-Fi deck for playback to retain the convenience of the cordless remote and special effects.

Stray Radiation

Q I bought one of those videocassette rewinders advertised in your magazine and now use it to rewind all of my cassettes. One problem I've run into, though, is that whenever the gadget is operating, it puts little white speckles into the picture on my TV set. Any way to get rid of this?

Michael Clarke
El Segundo, Cal.

A Most cassette rewinders use inexpensive electric motors to run them and like many other small appliances, they put out enough stray radiation to "glitch" your TV set. The easiest solution is to relocate the rewriter to another part of your living room.

Custom Fits

Q I've noticed a few VCRs available in department stores that, while looking almost identical to similar VCRs with the same brand name in other stores, carry a different model number. Are there differences that I'm not aware of? Name illegible
San Francisco, Cal.

A While not all manufacturers follow the practice of designating their VCRs with unique model numbers, two companies that do are Sony and RCA. The Sony SL-2406, for example, was essentially the same machine as the more widely available SL-2405, but sold through department stores like the May Co. in California. Similarly, the RCA VKT325 was a "customized" version of the VKT300.

Invariably, the differences between machines amount only to cosmetics, and the units are mechanically identical. But since some stores buy their inventory in much larger quantities than individual dealers, they can arrange for these cosmetic changes—differences they feel will distinguish their VCRs from everyone else's.

Far East, For Now

Q I got hold of a few Japanese video magazines from a friend. The ads are interesting and indicate that some products available over there aren't on sale in the United States. For example, Sony is selling a LaserVision player in Japan called Lasermix. Does it plan to sell this unit stateside?

Joe Yeager
San Jose, Cal.

A Sony U.S.A. told us that there are no plans to sell Lasermix in the U.S.—just yet. The machine, by the way, is manufactured in Japan by Pioneer, which also sells Sony-built Beta VCRs in Japan. Pioneer U.S.A., busy with its expanding LV-disc business, also isn't ready to jump into the U.S. Beta business. It feels the market is served well enough (for the moment) by Sony, NEC, Toshiba, Sanyo, Sears, Aiwa, and Radio Shack, the seven current members of the Beta group.

Track Record

Q A friend told me that it's good to keep track of the number of times you use a videocassette. He says he uses one special cassette to time-shift episodes of his favorite soap opera and makes a mark on the label each time it goes through his VCR. After he's used it about 100 times, he "retires" it and starts on another. What do you think of this idea?

J. Rossi
Brooklyn, N.Y.

A Keeping track of the number of "passes" a tape makes through a VCR is an excellent idea. In fact, professionals who use videotape every day keep a "pass record" by making marks on a special preprinted label which they stick onto the tape.

Preprinted cards are nice, but it's easy to make one with a small 3-by-5 index card or piece of graph paper. Either way, your friend is correct in tracking the lifespan of his cassettes—though keeping accurate records like this may

The heroics continue.



Walt Disney Home Video proudly presents *The Further Adventures of SuperTed*, Volume II in the animated series about the super-magical Teddy who can't bear crime.

SuperTed and Spottyman, his partner in heroics, rocket all over the universe protecting children and animals from harm.

**He's got
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made of.**

No bad guys are bigger bullies than Texas Pete and his two cowardly cronies, Bulk and Skeleton. But when SuperTed says his magic word, this cuddly bear can squeeze the stuffing out of any villain.

Kids love SuperTed, so be a hero and bring home both volumes. You'll be rewarded with bear hugs.

WALT DISNEY HOME VIDEO

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Fine Tuning

be beyond all but the most fastidious video librarians. Remember, however, every time you record and view a program, it counts as two passes—not one.

Betamaw

Q I've got a front-loading Sony SL-5010 and occasionally when I eject a cassette its corner will catch on one side of the hatch and the whole thing goes back inside the VCR before I can grab it. This doesn't happen all the time, but it's become enough of an annoyance that I thought I would write you about it.

Hal Davis
Atlanta, Ga.

A An important and timely question. While the trend to front-loading VCRs (which started with Sharp's VC-6800 back in 1980) does make for sleeker VCRs, the technology required to make them work has led to a few problems. In all front-loading designs, when a cassette is inserted into the slot it closes a switch that engages the motor-driven mechanism. This mechanism pulls the cassette the rest of the way into the VCR, automatically lowering it onto the reel tables inside.

Occasionally, if the teeth in the reel hubs on the cassette don't line up with the teeth in the drive reels inside the VCR, the cassette will be ejected auto-

matically. Usually, the cassette will seat properly on the second attempt—especially if you rotate one of the reels in the cassette slightly. Similar problems arise from a label that curls up on the top side of the cassette or a piece of thick, gummy tape stuck over the knock-out tab.

More serious problems can occur if the cassette is poorly molded or warped. Avoiding cheap, off-brand tapes will prevent most of these problems. Subtle differences in the shape of name-brand cassette can occur, though, and this can lead to problems. Many 3M HGX cassettes, for example, have trouble going through the door of new Sony Betamaxs, such as the SL-2710, even though they fit other machines without a hitch.

As for your problem, you can probably head off the difficulty by pushing a finger against one side of the tape when it's ejected, straightening out its path. Consistent misloading problems will require a trip to the repair shop.

C'mon Down!

Q I've seen a lot of VCR ads in the paper lately with no price given for the merchandise. All they say is "call," or "too low to quote." Why don't they just print the price and let it go at that?

Scott Gray
Glendale, Cal.

A It's obvious—to get you curious enough to call or visit the store! Once there, who knows what you might buy?

Used and Abused

Q I've seen several ads in the newspaper for used videocassettes, and often at attractive prices compared to what you'd pay for new ones—even at discount. Do you think buying used tape is a good idea?

Peter Warren
New York, N.Y.

A A difficult question. As more VCRs are sold, the number of Beta and VHS cassettes out there continues to grow. I've seen the ads for used cassettes too, but it's hard to know whether they are a good deal. Even if the price is \$1 for a VHS T-120, if the tape turns out to be extensively damaged and your VCR is damaged, you haven't made out too well. On the other hand, a few cheap used cassettes could come in handy if you wanted to repair a damaged cassette from your regular collection—just as a source of hard-to-obtain cassette parts.

The problem is that it's difficult to tell what the condition of a cassette is just by its appearance. Considering the relatively low cost of new half-inch cassettes—less than \$5 for a T-120 or L-750, with

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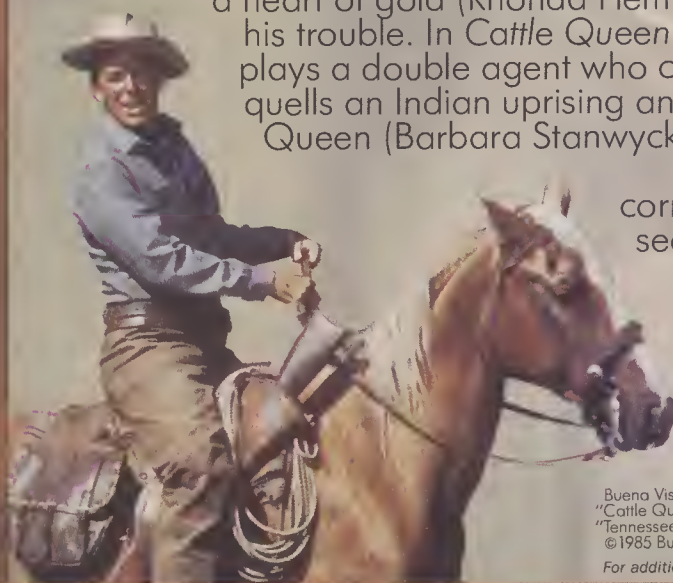
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Fine Tuning

prices going down constantly—it makes little economic sense to buy used tapes. I'm also afraid of seeing some sleazy company buy up used cassettes and re-package them as new or "off-brand" tape. I'd stay away from that stuff, just as I would the illegal and unlicensed Beta and VHS stock that doesn't carry the official logos.

Tape Trauma

Q I'm enclosing a sample piece of tape from one of my VHS videocassettes. The tape was damaged in my Magnavox VCR. What has caused the damage and is there anything I can do to correct the problem?

M. J. Welby
Cleveland, Ohio

A There are two possible causes of this sort of edge damage. On some top-loading VCRs, if the cassette hatch doesn't lower into exactly the right position the tape can thread incorrectly, hitting the top or bottom edge of the VCR's internal guides rather than landing evenly between them. The guides will then crease, fold, or furl the edge of the tape. Since this is a machine fault, the machine needs to be fixed.

The other cause—a more frequent problem—arises within the cassette itself. It's important that the tape and leaders be evenly attached to the reel hubs and not touch the top or bottom reels. If it's attached unevenly it will feed out of the cassette the same way and be dragged across the lower edge of the cassette shell, causing the damage. Storing cassettes horizontally (flat) can aggravate the problem since the weight of the tape will cause it to collect near the bottom of the reel.

Tape scratching is another problem. A continuous horizontal scratch (which looks like a permanent dropout on the TV screen) can be caused by dirt adhering to any of the several guide posts inside the cassette. Handling cassettes with care and storing them away from dusty areas can minimize this. More recently, cassette manufacturers have discovered that a great deal of static electricity is generated during the rewinding mode. In the VHS format especially, this static couples with a vacuum effect created when the tape passes over the front of the cassette housing at high speed to draw the tape closer to the shell, where it's vulnerable to scratching. Manufacturers have countered this problem in two ways. One is to use anti-static plastic. The second is to improve the transport mechanism inside the VCR, creating a safer path for the tape. Many recent VHS machines (like those built by Hitachi) now pull a slight loop of tape out from the cassette before commencing the winding mode. Others provide a centrally-located guide pin designed to keep the tape from touching the cassette surface.

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Both "SUMMER MAGIC" and "THAT DARN CAT" are now available for the first time ever on videocassette.

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All these hits are Hayley entertaining. Now on videocassette from Walt Disney Home Video.

**WALT DISNEY
HOME VIDEO**



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Threshold is a movie of rare merit that truly captures the awe, wonder and amazement of those special peak-experiences encountered in flight.

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OUR GUARANTEE		TOTAL MERCHANDISE			
If for any reason you are not delighted with your selection, simply return it to us within three weeks for replacement or refund. Our tapes are of the utmost quality and should have virtually no defects on your money back.		SHIPPING CHARGES			
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NOTHING BY CHANCE is a film masterpiece which grew from the dream of author Richard Bach (*Jonathan Livingston Seagull*) to return to aviation of a simpler time and lifestyle. It's a moving story about the Great American Flying Circus. Five aviators who sought to relive a way of life they thought had disappeared over forty years ago. **NOTHING BY CHANCE** captures the joys and disappointments of these men as they learn to live by the "Barnstormers' Code." During the course of one summer, they discover what barnstorming is all about. A bedroll under a fabric biplane, the freedom of an open cockpit, and the unity between man and machine. They learn that **NOTHING** in life is truly **BY CHANCE**, that each event in our lives has its own significance and meaning. The film follows these reborn aviators as they travel across the scenic midwest, taking eagerly awaiting passengers on an exhilarating flight among the clouds. Each passenger can only hope to catch a glimpse of this fleeting moment in time, this backward glance into yesterday. And each pilot can only do his best to share it with them....

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NOTE: All applicable copyright laws must be complied with. Violations shall be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

Fine Tuning

The Official Seal

Q What's the best way to store videocassettes for the longterm? I know that they should be stored vertically along an edge rather than horizontally, but what about environmental conditions?

R. Ciacelli
Madison, Wis.

A To create the best storage conditions for your cassettes, try placing each one in one of those self-sealing kitchen storage bags along with a packet of a moisture-absorbing chemical called Silica Gel. These packets can be obtained from most camera stores, and are inexpensive. Seal the bag at the top, trying to trap as little air as possible inside. Then store the cassettes at room temperature. I wouldn't go to this extreme for all your cassettes, but for extra special ones, it's a worthwhile idea.

Labor Pains

Q When I bought my VCR, the salesman suggested that I buy an extra one-year service contract good for both parts and labor. He pointed out that most VCRs come with only a 90-day labor warranty. The contract would have cost an extra \$50. I declined to purchase it, but am now wondering if it might not have been a bad idea.

Tom Bronstein
West Covina, Cal.

A Most VCRs are precision instruments and are quite reliable despite their mechanical and electronic complexity. Generally, if a problem is going to occur with your new machine, you'll notice it almost immediately. In that event, you have the recourse of either taking it back to the dealer for replacement (if he offers this service) or to an authorized service center for repair.

The 90-day warranty on labor is usually enough. Warranties on parts generally run for a year and some selected components like video heads have two year warranties. When I recently purchased a Panasonic PV-1730 I declined the optional service contract even though the machine cost over \$1000. Why? Perhaps because I had confidence in the product, Panasonic's own warranty, or my ability to debug any problem that might arise.

Others may find the \$40 to \$50 charge a modest price to pay for an additional nine months of labor-free service. For those folks, the service contract makes sense. Just be sure you understand up front what those extra dollars provide for and who will do the work, if and when it is required.

Coming
in March.

WALT DISNEY HOME VIDEO

MOUSERCISE

Get your kids
moving in the
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Walt Disney Home Video brings families to their feet with *Mousercise*, the new exercise tape that makes fitness fun.

Mousercise is an upbeat exercise program developed especially for children like yours, with special appearances by their favorite Disney characters. Led by Kellyn, the popular instructor who makes kids jump for joy, *Mousercisers* develop coordination, stamina and rhythm while moving to great music. And *Mousercise* includes a special pre-teen segment, in which Kellyn demonstrates step-by-step exercises working specific muscle groups.

It's never too early to build strong bodies. So get your kids moving with *Mousercise*. It's positively habit forming.

\$39⁹⁵*



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Telecommunications and Non-Theatrical Company, Burbank, California 91521.

Walt Disney Home Video distributed by Walt Disney
*Suggested Retail Price

For additional information, circle No. 32 on Reader Service Card.

Videogram

The Electronic Intelligencer

by William Wolfe

Cathode Catalogue

Catalogue shopping is booming these days, but in the video age it was just a matter of time until someone plugged it all in and christened it "electronic shopping." Electronistore Systems Inc.—while not the only outfit in this new field—has done just that in a big way. By linking together an LV-disc player, microcomputer, and two color video monitors, ESI has developed Electronistore information and ordering units, and plans to deposit them in department stores (to be named later) and shopping malls nationwide.

"It's a way to save time, and it's easy to use," says ESI President William D. McDonald Jr. "The system provides incredibly detailed information in a way that is easy to understand." The system is well-thought-out. The electronics are housed inside a kiosk and the whole unit looks like a large sit-down arcade game. (A spokesman declined to name the brands of equipment used, though he cracked and revealed that 3M presses the LV discs.)

A 19-inch monitor introduces the Electronistore hostess and displays still pictures or full-motion demonstrations of the products. Another 13-inch monitor displays several different indexes, lists up to five pages of details on any given item, and even has a "Just Looking" feature that instructs the system to browse through its inventory. If you decide to make a purchase, just slip a major credit card into the receptacle, punch in the pro-

ducts you want, and out comes a receipt complete with delivery information—all by way of a touch-sensitive screen. Keyboards were ruled out because, McDonald says, "our research shows that shoppers just don't like them."

There are advantages to the Electronistore system. Inside the kiosk there are no shopping-mall salesmen babbling between bites of a Big Mac, no gimmicks, and no pressure—just a well-mannered, competent, eager-to-please combination of intelligent electronic components waiting to serve. It's a definite improvement over print catalogues, and could be the best way to get essential product information to shoppers in some suburban and rural areas.

Catalogue shoppers are ESI's real target. "We're not trying to displace anyone, you know," McDonald says. "But things that sell well in catalogues will sell well in Electronistore."

Meat-Market Video

At the supermarket, you can buy ground chuck, pay a little more for ground round, or pay through the nose for sirloin. Now, thanks to Essex Video, you can buy a "Video Classics" X-rated video, pay a little more for an "Electric Hollywood" X-rated video, or pay through the kazoo for an "Essex 24-Karat" X-rated video. If you're familiar with adult videos, you have to admit it's an honest approach.

"The number of new independent producers and the glut of product confuses even the most knowledgeable adult-video buyer," says Essex President Jeff Steinman. Store shelves are indeed filled with tapes that appear indistinguishable from one another. "But what's on the inside is generally not what's portrayed on the outside," he cautions. How can you judge whether a tape will keep the promises made by its packaging? Steinman thinks he's got the answer. "Our new

philosophy is simple and straightforward. We are now a diverse and complete adult video company covering the entire spectrum of viewers with three separate and distinct lines." New full-length features, coupled with best-sellers from the Essex library, are added monthly to each line. As you'd expect, Essex will release twice as many low-budget Video Classics as they will 24-Karats in 1985.

The 24-Karat line contains "only the cream of the crop, the best of the best," and lists for \$69.95, Steinman says. Electric Hollywood videos, listing for \$59.95, are "the competitive line, incorporating something for everyone." You can guess what the Video Classics are. (They list for \$39.95.) As for the future, Steinman says "Essex will continue to do what it does best. We're going to entertain viewers. Essex is a tomorrow company."

Take that, Little Orphan Annie.



Illustrations by Steven Max Singer

It Floats

What is 16 feet tall, 18 feet wide, 65 feet long, and has 3 motorized fish swimming at the back? No, not *Jaws IV*. It's Family Home Entertainment's Tournament of Roses Parade float.

FHE makes and distributes kidvid like the Care Bears, Strawberry Shortcake, and Gumby. As for the meeting of the "Great American Tradition" and the great American trend toward video, FHE President Noel C. Bloom said that it proves "home video is a major presence in the American way of life." For the millions of viewers who caught the New Year's Day parade, the connection was made.

Designed on the theme of the Saturday-night bath, the float features a bath-bound youngster, pet sheepdog, and teddy bear (looking suspiciously like a Care Bear) and is covered with Dutch iris, Cataleja orchids, and of course roses. "The youngster imagines himself as George Washington crossing the Delaware," says FHE's Tom Bishop. Then there are the motorized fish "who dart in and out of the bubbles generated as a wake from the float." Bubbles? "We estimate 2,100,000 bubbles," Bishop adds.

With the exposure gained from a national TV audience, it should be a happy new year for FHE.

The Final Accessory

Movies and candy are inseparable—just ask the guy who picks up the Sugar Babies wrappers and popcorn boxes off the theater floor after everyone else has gone home. Since thousands of movies are rented and sold on video every day, don't be surprised if you see a line of candy-buyers stretching out the door of your—yep, your local video store. A Salt-Lake City-based food wholesaler called Shirley J. is bringing VideoTime Treats candy to video stores across the country.

"People associate movies with the kind of treats you buy at theater snack bars," says Richard Smith, Shirley J.'s Marketing Director. "Now that everybody's taking


movies home, they want to take movie treats home too. Our VideoTime Treats are out there, so now they can." A typical VideoTime rack holds several dozen bags of Shirley J. candy and snacks.

(Most are made by the well-known candy makers and repackaged with the Shirley J. brandname). Smith says you might even find bags of popping corn, though there's no butter and you'll have to pick



up soda somewhere else, unless Coke or Pepsi decides to—nah, forget it.

The idea seems to be convenient, and that at least makes some kind of sense. If you *do* want candy to go with *The Empire Strikes Back*, you won't have to stop somewhere else to buy it. Munching on the candy while you're picking out a tape is a definite no-no—that'd be like tearing open the Twizzlers during a theater's coming-attractions previews.

Consider it this way—some people spend hundreds of dollars on large-screen TVs, surround-sound decoders, and extra speakers and amplifiers to recreate the movie-theater "experience." You can spend a buck on some candy and not be too far behind. 

Vidbits



Neal Armstrong

Buzz Aldrin and Old Glory (1969): memories of the man on the moon.

Moon shots are free for the asking, courtesy of Joe and Gerry Bonica of Movie Newsreels. To get a price-less color slide from the video transmission of the Apollo 11 moon landing, just send a 9-1/2-by-4-inch stamped self-addressed envelope to the Bonicas at Box 2589, Hollywood, Calif. 90028.

Alternative video is keeping pace with the never ending surge of recorded theatrical films and other mainstream entertainment. New from the Stefaan Janssen Studio alternative video catalogue are *Beginning Knitting* with Kay Blanck, *Bellydance for Fitness and Fun*, and *Let's Have an Irish Party* with Carmell Quinn, Anna McGoldrick,

and the world champion Reagan family dancers. To order a catalogue listing well over 500 alternative titles, write the studio at 4615 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60625; or call 312-728-9277.

Crime pays—just ask Valerio Morucci and Adriana Faranda. The couple are Italian Red Brigade terrorists serving life-term sentences for their part in the kidnap and murder of Aldo Moro, Italy's former premier. The pay—an undisclosed amount—comes from Italian film producer Mauro Berardi, who's signed the pair as technical advisors for the movie adaptation of Robert Katz's *Days of Wrath*, the definitive book about the

1978 case.

Want some culture?


Try the "William Shakespeare Series," new from New Jersey-based independent Kultur. First in the series are a pair of tragedies, *King Richard II* and *Macbeth*. *Richard* runs nearly 3 hours on a two-tape package and stars David Birney in the title role. *Macbeth*, running 2-1/2 hours, stars Piper Laurie as Lady Macbeth. "We'll be releasing a lot of tragedies this spring," says Kultur's Dennis M. Hedlund. The dramatic kind, that is—*Lear*, *Othello*, and *Romeo and Juliet* will be available later this year along with many of the bard's comedies and histories. Each video play runs \$175.



PHOTO BY SUZE RANDALL

THRILLERVIDEO/A DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL VIDEO ENTERTAINMENT, INC.



 "Hello darlings! Allow me to introduce myself. For those of you who might not know me—I'm that horror movie hostess who gives it her mostest...ELVIRA™, Mistress of the Dark. All across America (we're talking broad appeal), I'm the gal who put the boob back in the boob tube!

Anyway, I'm so excited I could almost have an accident.....over being able to host THRILLERVIDEO. Every other month you can look forward to seeing the best in horror films starring macabredom's finest.

For example, in February there's *MONSTER CLUB*, starring my bosom buddies—*Vincent Price* and *John Carradine*. Also, we've got *THE SILENT SCREAM* with *Peter Cushing*, plus two diabolical chillers entitled *WITCHING TIME* and *CHILDREN OF THE FULL MOON*.

So, get ready for a howling good time with THRILLERVIDEO and me.....and remember, like ELVIRA™ says, unpleasant dreams..."

THE MOST UNPLEASANT DREAMS ON VIDEOCASSETTE

FOR A CATALOGUE LISTING OF ALL OUR VIDEO TITLES, PLEASE SEND \$1.00 TO COVER
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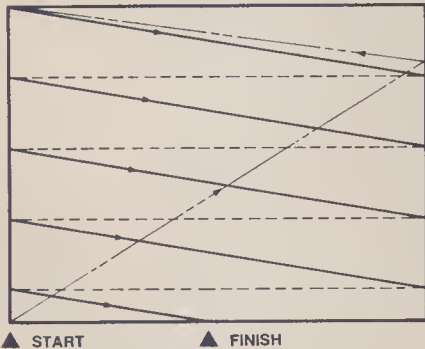
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TV Den

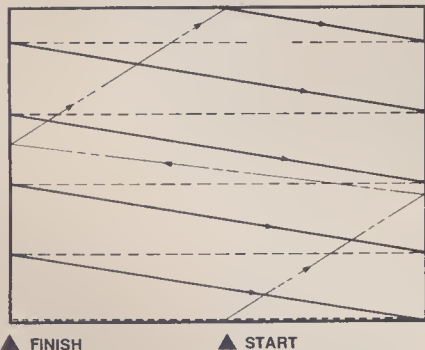
Techniques and Technology

Resolving Horizontal Resolution

by Roderick Woodcock



Field 1: negative-charged electrons trace the odd-numbered lines from left to right.



Field 2: after the 'vertical retrace interval,' electrons trace the even lines.

There are lines and then there are lines. Like when I visit my bank on Friday afternoon, that's a line. And when you try to talk your date into—well, you know—that's another line. But the kinds of lines we're talking about in video are just numbers ranging from 240 to 700 or more, cryptically appearing on manufacturers' specification

sheets for VCRs, TVs, and monitors.

These lines are called "lines of resolution," and there are two distinct kinds—vertical and horizontal. Both are a measure of the picture quality of a video product. Vertical resolution, our topic this month, refers to the number of lines that are transmitted using our 525-line NTSC (National Television Systems Committee) television system. These lines trace their pattern across the screen horizontally, one above the other, but what's important is the number that can be stacked vertically—hence the term "vertical resolution." The other figure to consider,

"horizontal resolution," is a measure of how many vertically-arranged lines can be seen or measured (resolved) from one side of your TV screen to the other.

The two terms, while related, really refer to two distinct concepts. Part of the confusion about the two is attributable to the way in

which the figures are derived. Contradictory as it seems, vertical resolution refers to the spacing of horizontally-arranged scan lines, while horizontal resolution refers to the spacing of vertically-arranged lines. To understand how each concept relates to the other, it's essential that you have a good idea of how a TV creates and reproduces the pictures we see. To appreciate these technical subtleties, it helps if you think of everything happening in terms of certain amounts of time. While one single second may not seem like much time to most of us, the high-speed world of electronics can pack a great deal of activity into that relatively small time-line.

In the medium of television, a single second can be broken down into 30 separate TV pictures called "frames," the TV equivalent of the 18 or 24 individual pictures that comprise a single second of motion picture film. As in the movies, the "moving" picture we see on our TV screen is really an illusion—an array of rapidly-changing still pictures shuttling by so rapidly that they fool our eyes into seeing a continuously moving picture by means of a visual property of the eye called "persistence of vision." Each 30 frames contain 525 lines, for a total of 15,750 scanning lines every second.

But those 30 video frames don't represent the bottom line in our analysis of the TV signal. Each frame consists of two separate parts called "fields," and one field is recorded every 1/60th of a second. But we're not done yet, since each field consists of even smaller

electronic divisions—the lines we've been talking about. (Now we're getting down to the electronic roots of the TV signal.) These subdivisions of video fields are those same horizontally-scanned lines that form the basis of our concept of vertical resolution. There are 262-1/2 lines in each field and since two fields add up to a single TV frame, we're back to that famous 525-line NTSC number.

To complicate things a little more, consider that all of those horizontal "lines" that appear on our TV screen are just the result of one rapidly-moving electronic paintbrush—the scanning spot of the picture tube found in your TV or monitor. This single scanning beam of light is really a stream of carefully-timed electrons. Electrons have a negative charge and are emitted from a gadget known as a cathode, which is why some monitors are called CRTs (for "Cathode Ray Tubes"). The cathode emits electrons that bombard the inner surface of your TV screen, moving from left to right across the face of the screen (a round trip which takes 1/15,734th of a second, or 63.5 microseconds—that's micro, or millionths of a second). The cathode turns itself off for about 11 microseconds while it flips back to the other side and turns itself on again. This 11-microsecond interval is known as "horizontal blanking."

The cathode then paints another line across the screen in the same direction, beneath the one it just completed. This pattern repeats itself as the scanning spot proceeds down the surface of the screen, or until all 262-1/2

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EDUCATING RITA*	1593012	HIGH ROAD TO CHINA*	6022012	NEVER CRY WOLF*	5305012
THE NATURAL*	1649052	KING KONG (Original)	5502022	NORTH BY NORTHWEST	2509022
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JANE FONDA'S WORKOUT CHALLENGE	5260042	SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON	5504002		
DIRTY HARRY*	6017082	IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT	1655062		
		SOUND OF MUSIC*	0039212		

odd-numbered lines have been traced out. Then it turns itself off again, jumps back to the top left hand side of the screen, and starts over again. (This "off" period is called the "vertical retrace interval," and can last 1174 to 1327 microseconds.) This time it traces out another zig-zag pattern of light between the spaces left during its previous pass—that is, the remaining even-numbered lines. This is called "interface scanning" and explains why a single field contains only half of the video informa-

tion needed to reproduce an entire TV frame. Since by their nature electrons are not very disciplined little critters, the television system forces them into these predefined scanning patterns by means of a system of timed electromagnetic pulses. Add up all these carefully-timed electron events and you'll come up with approximately 1/60th of a second for every field. And two fields taken together equal one frame, each of which takes about 1/30th of a second.

The picture you see on your TV

screen is the result of these rapidly-moving electrons as they vary the intensity of their brightness in response to the changing electrical signal, lighting up the phosphor coating inside the face of your picture tube. In color TVs, the electrons also cause red, green, or blue dots or lines to glow as well, either singly or together to create color images.

Why not just scan all 525 lines in a single pass? Because when the system was being developed its designers discovered that interlacing the video information from two adjacent fields helped reduce the amount of flicker in the picture, making it more viewable and easier on the eye. Remember also that while we've talked about the theoretical number of 525 lines, in reality the number being scanned only amounts to 484, since it takes time for our little scanning spot to move around with its headlights out—and that's the time that would be devoted to those additional 41 lines. What's left over—484—is referred to as "active" lines since they can be used to create picture information we can see.

Now an important part of this television scanning system approximates the frequency of the electrical system on which it runs. In the U.S., the electrical standard is for 60-cycle alternating current. That means that for every cycle in the electrical signal, the video signal can record or play back one field of video information. It's the electrical system that provides the rough "timing" to keep the system operating correctly, though the critical timing at the microsecond level is maintained by timing pulses within the broadcast picture. In contrast, the PAL system used in Europe and a large part of the rest of the world works on a 50-cycle/25-frame system based on a 625-line system. This is the major reason why you can't play back European videotapes on VCRs intended for the U.S. market, or vice-versa.

While 484 vertically-arranged horizontal lines may seem like enough for a good picture, it isn't necessarily so. For a variety of technical reasons, we've got to reduce that number even more—down to around 340 lines, or about 70 percent of 484. The reason for this line loss is the inability of the scanning beam to pick up or reproduce extremely fine detail in the original picture. The fine details of the picture disappear between the lines and are not reproduced, or are reproduced erratically. Depending on what textbook you read, this effect is called the "Kell factor" (after the British scientist who first identified it) or the "utilization ratio."

So now you know a little bit about how TV pictures are made, and what part lines of vertical resolution play in bringing these pictures about. That leaves horizontal resolution—more about *that* in months to come.

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Intelligent Micros?

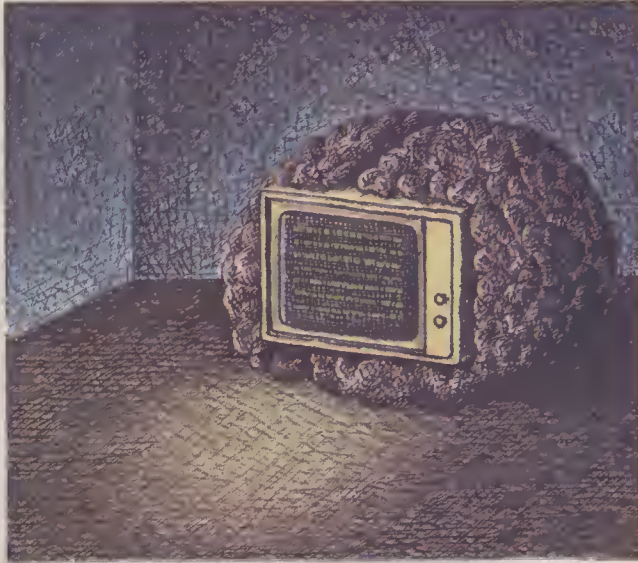
The words "smart" and "intelligent" have long been associated with computers and software. But is a computer that repeats a sequence of activities truly smart? Can a program which only responds to a predetermined set of circumstances be intelligent?

Researchers working in the field of artificial intelligence will say no, and tell you that notions of "smart"—which once meant endowed with the power of a computing machine—and "dumb" (devoid of the same) are changing. But will our machines ever impress us with the quality of their thought?

Take the case of *ELIZA*, the first program to mimic the process of psychoanalysis. Written in the early 1960s by MIT's Dr. Joseph Weizenbaum, it asked probing questions in much the same way a psychologist or therapist would, drawing personal responses from users who were led to elaborate on their problems and feelings.

ELIZA would do this because it was designed to act the way a psychologist would act. The logic behind the program was relatively simple. It would continue to ask about whatever topic the user typed into the machine. If you said you had trouble sleeping at night, it would ask why you thought you had trouble sleeping at night. *ELIZA* was also loaded to randomly interrupt into the conversation. It would ask, for example, "Why do you resent your father?"

ELIZA opened a few eyes. Some psychiatrists reacted fearfully and defended their honorable practice. (Would they be the next victims of



automation?) Computer scientists, though, were stimulated to think that they might be able to imbue their machines and programs with the real thing—inductive logic.

Today, one of the hottest microcomputer party games is a small but impressive program called "Mind Prober." Principally authored by a psychologist, Dr. James H. Johnson, it prepares personality inventories about people. Using it, one person describes another by agreeing or disagreeing with a list of personality traits, terms like "self-blaming," "distant," and "striving."

Instead of simply issuing a statement based on a one-to-one correlation of these traits, *Mind Prober* constructs an intricate map of the responses and, by inductive logic, prepares a complex report that includes advice on the subject's ability to cope with stress, respond to competition, and even react to affection. A *Mind Prober* report can seem astonishingly accurate.

It shouldn't be surprising

that Dr. Johnson's academic research has centered on computer-aided psychological assessment and on a classic psychology test called the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). This is the test given to many American college students in the 1960s that included seemingly bizarre questions such as, "Are you afraid to touch doorknobs?"

A spokesman for Johnson's company, Human Edge Software, emphasizes that *Mind Prober* isn't so much a psychological program as a demonstration of an "expert" system at work. The so-called "knowledge base" around which it is built is Johnson's, and the reports it delivers are his wisdom.

Soon Human Edge will begin offering another higher-powered program for microcomputers called *Expert Ease*, which will allow anyone with access to a personal computer to construct a knowledge base of what they know best. So social workers can advise other social workers, auto mechanics can offer counsel to other auto mechan-

ics, and secretaries can presumably tattle on their bosses to one another—all via the machine.

But, like *ELIZA*, are *Mind Prober* and the other coming "expert" systems really intelligent? Or do they offer only the illusion of intelligence?

Wisdom differs from knowledge, just as knowledge is more than a collection of facts on hand. Real wisdom, we should remind ourselves, relies on depth of experience and quality of thought. If in fact wisdom could be compressed into a hundred or so pages of text—the capacity of a typical floppy disk—then it would be an easy thing to acquire, with or without a machine. As we all know, however, wisdom remains the most illusive of human commodities.

We will undoubtedly be suitably awed by experiments in artificial intelligence such as *Mind Prober* and the coming wave of expert programs, just as we are suitably awed by the performance of a new model of automobile. The computer has proven that it will continue to astonish and amaze us with its capabilities. We should not, however, confuse engineering with humanity—nor mistake it for true wisdom. —Tim Onosko

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy Infocom, IBM PC, Apple II series, Atari

Unless you've been in the neighborhood of the Crab Nebula for the last few years, you've probably run across *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* in one of its incarnations. Originally a BBC radio show, it has also shown up as three books and a television serial. Now it's on

floppy disk as well, with new material written by Douglas Adams, the original perpetrator. Programmed by Steve Meretzky, who wrote Infocom's earlier space adventure, *Planetfall*, it survives the transition as wacky and spaced-out as ever.

Like all of Infocom's adventures, *Hitchhiker's* is text-only—you'll have to provide the graphics yourself. The story is a simple one: you are Arthur Dent, a rather ineffectual but lovable Englishman who awakes one Thursday morning to discover that his home is about to be leveled by bulldozers. What he doesn't know is that his planet faces the same fate. Luckily, his friend Ford Prefect is a native of a planet near Betelgeuse and the owner of a Sub-Etha Signaling Device (or Thumb). Ford uses this to hitch a ride for himself and Arthur on one of the Vogon ships intent on destroying Earth to make way for a hyperspatial express route. And that's only the beginning.

The opening scenario will be familiar to anyone who's read the book, but that doesn't exactly give you a great head start. Familiar characters do pop up throughout the game, however, such as Marvin, the Paranoïd Android, Zaphod Beeblebrox, and the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal. (Consult the *Guide* for details on these and other matters of importance).

There may be a few minor problems with *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, but the game is so engrossing, funny, and often so infuriatingly difficult that you'll hardly notice them. It is worth noting, however, that unlike other Infocom text adventures, this one has a particularly perverse sense of humor. Be prepared to be deviously misled. When this

happens, be persistent and suppress any desire to torch your computer.

—Louise Kohl

Flight Simulator & Flight Simulator II

Micro Software and Sublogic/
IBM PC, Apple II series,
Commodore and Atari

Flight simulation has been a popular subject for computer software virtually since its inception. The headspinning success that's followed Bruce Artwick's *Flight Simulator I & II* is unprecedented.

Although released by two different companies (*FS* is offered by Micro Software for the IBM PC while *FS II* is a Sublogic product now available for the Apple, Commodore, and Atari), the programs are virtually identical and have, in fact, spent most last fall playing musical chairs with the top two spots on the bestseller list. *FS* is software created for a powerhouse computer while the sequel/update takes advantage of the action-graphic capabilities associated with the popular micros.

At first glance these programs may seem more than a little daunting to the computer novice. The documentation, while it can hardly be faulted for thoroughness, could certainly have been presented more concisely. Few would-be pilots will be inclined to actually read the two hefty books that comprise the instructions before takeoff. One book contains exhaustive directions on everything from disk loading to landing while the second publication is a treatise on aerodynamic theory and makes for interesting background material. For those not inclined toward an hour or two of heavy reading, however, there is a card containing the function capability of each computer key. Unhappily, this data—which could just as easily been printed on a single sheet of paper—has instead been run off on *both sides* of a half-size card, which means constantly having to take hands off the keyboard to flip over the data card. Still, it won't be long before most players are conversant with all commands.



The program itself has three types of flight. The standard mode offers, as might be expected, standard flight simulation, complete with a second disk containing a quartet of destinations. (L.A., New York, Chicago, and Seattle). While piloting your Cessna, you have access to aerial views from all directions. The graphics are sparse but topographically accurate.

A second mode allows more advanced armchair pilots the thrill of stunt, or

"trick," flying—a subject covered at great length in the documentation—and once you become adroit enough, you can check out the Dogfight option for more game-oriented thrills.

In short, these programs offer something for every user. The detail is magnificent and, though I have never flown a real plane, creates an environment that seems scrupulously realistic. And that, after all, is what simulations are all about.

—Bill Kunkel

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1. **Flight Simulator II.** AT, C64, AP. Sublogic.
2. **Flight Simulator.** IBM. Microsoft.
3. **Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.** C64, IBM, AP. Infocom.
4. **Sargon III.** AP, C64, IBM, MAC. Hayden Software.
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New Channels

Covering Cable, Pay-Per-View, STV, and DBS

The Great White Northern Hope

by William A. Marsano



At a time when a common topic of video conversation is the brain-straining vision of 200-watt supersatellites raining DBS programming down on entire nations, it is relaxing to reflect on small-scale operations for a change. What comes to mind is David Brough, the Johnny Appleseed of television.

"I pride myself on once having owned more television stations than anyone else in the world," Brough says. "Even if the total audience wouldn't be any larger than the population of St. Jamestown"—a Canadian community so small that your chances of finding it in an atlas are close to nil.

Your chances of finding it anywhere are pretty poor. David Brough specialized in what has since become known as "low-power TV" for small underserved or unserved communities. He had the poor judgment to try it in Canada, and the Canadian government spent years trying to put him out of business.

Canada is a big country (the second-largest in the

world) but mostly an empty one—only about 24 million people are rattling around in all that acreage up there. Large stretches of Canada are habitable to only a marginal degree—but where there is precious metal in the earth, men dig mines. The result is that small and thoroughly isolated communities of a few hundred or so are scattered all over the map.

Canada has a gigantic government-owned TV service called CBC, which siphons about three quarters of a billion dollars a year out of the public treasury. One of its self-imposed tasks has been and still is to bring television service to practically every middlesex, village, and farm in the entire nation. Somehow, it has managed to leave a lot of people without any TV at all. Brough stepped in to fill the gap.

His idea was to build tiny TV stations across Canada and unite them in the Northern Access Network. People would run their own stations, and Brough would make a few dollars setting them up and providing tapes of programs. He would hope for support from local businesses—usually the mines—and collect viewer donations. Eventually he would be reduced to scaring up funds by running TV bingo nights. But in the interim he not only owned 60 TV stations but started all of them from the ground up. In fact, he *built* them.

"I remember the early days," he says, speaking of the mid-'70s. "I had a beat-up old car that I traded for a beat-up van. The first time I went up to Pickle Lake"—a one-skunk mining town deep

in north-central Ontario—"I had the doors tied shut with a rope. I had to start the van by starting it with a spoon, and work the lights and horn by crossing wires. It was cold, so I was driving while wrapped up in a sleeping bag, and I had to breathe out of the side of my mouth so my breath wouldn't freeze up on the inside of the windshield."

In the back of the van was Pickle Lake's TV station, or most of it. "I had cable that I scrounged from a cable company. The transmitter was a regular apartment-house MATV amplifier. I had a regular receiving antenna and some tape I salvaged from the garbage cans" of Ontario's provincial educational-TV station. "I used to put stations together for about \$1500, including the Betamaxes." If it all sounds like a one-man operation, it was and it wasn't: Brough had one unfailing helper in his wife, Joanie, who would spend most of her time back in Toronto operating the VCRs that recorded the programs the low-power stations would air.

Eventually Brough's Northern Access Network ran from sea to shining sea—"from St. Anthony, Newfoundland, way up where all the seal hunting is, to Stewart, British Columbia, right on the Pacific Ocean. In between we had places like Long Lac, Red Lake, Inuvik, Frobisher Bay, and Tuktoyaktuk." And of course Pickle Lake.

"Joanie would do the taping in Toronto, which was a great place for it—it gets more TV stations than any

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New Channels

other city in North America," 20 of them over the air and by cable. "I found a way to modify a Sony Betamax so it would play and record for more than an hour. We actually had them going for 15 hours, and I don't think anybody yet has a VCR that will go 15 hours. It was a little crude, with the tape wound up on a big movieprojector reels, but it worked. And we had probably the best programming service in North America. With all those stations to choose from, we could take our pick, so when a game show came on, we'd switch to something better. When newscasts came on, we'd cut those out too. Since the tapes would be three months old by the time they had been bicycled through all the stations, the news would be pretty stale."

Crude and cheap as they were, Brough's stations were loved and fiercely defended by the people out in the bush. "In many places we ran 24 hours a day," Brough recalls, with as many as three or four channels. And the towns that did get CBC service got only four hours a night in black & white.

Unfortunately for Brough, Canada is a nation not devoted to private enterprise. The Canadian government likes to own things, and in particular it wants to control communications. To make matters worse, Brough's dime-store operation was more successful than the government-owned CBC in reaching the rural outposts. It was more responsive to its viewers, putting on the stuff they wanted to watch. And it didn't take \$750 million a year to do it.

So the government decided to put Brough out of business. It should have been easy, because everything Brough did was illegal. He didn't have any licenses, and couldn't get any. When he applied for grants to bring his equipment up to specification, his applications were ignored by the Department of Communications. When he pointed out that his stations interfered with no one and competed with no one—that most of his viewers would otherwise have no TV at all from any source—the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) sent in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to shut the stations down and confiscate his equipment. When he tried to advertise his services on CBC, they wouldn't sell him any time. Instead, they'd send out reporters "to do these incredible negative interviews, like, 'Why are you subjecting these poor people to a service you know will be taken off the air?'"

"When I went into any town I would first meet with a local advisory council, and the government would send in their agents to make it known that they would license anybody but me. Every one of these meetings was attended by a pair of DOC guys sitting in the back and tak-

ing notes. It got so that I would introduce them when I got up to speak. That always got a big round of applause."

It should have been easy to put Brough out of business. He was underfinanced—~~un~~financed is more like it—without political friends, and utterly powerless. But it wasn't so easy. Brough would prove to be one man the Mounties didn't get. Folklore will record the incident as the Battle of Pickle Lake, and it was a signal triumph for free enterprise. And alcohol.

Brough had started the Pickle Lake station in 1975, and had been steadily supplying it with air-freight shipments of tapes from Toronto—but in 1977 the feds closed in. Their first move was to intimidate the mine into withdrawing its financial support of the station. "That

'The CBC sent up one big toughie. . . I wouldn't exactly call him a hitman, but he did threaten to punch me out.'

was typical," Brough says. "They would tell people they were accessories to a crime. They even did that to the old people at a senior citizens' complex where we were asked to install a satellite dish." Brough responded by going to the residents for donations, which kept the station going.

Then the feds decided to send in the Mounties and shut down the station by force. A contingent was sent Pickle Lakeward from Thunder Bay, which is in about the middle of the northern shoreline of Lake Superior and supplied with lots of bureaucrats and busybodies. "But they had to go up the road to get there," Brough says, "and the 'road' was 200 miles of gravel and dirt, so the moccasin telegraph"—a loose system of gossip and CB radios—"was faster and we knew they were coming. And that gave everybody time to get into the bars."

Pickle Lake has but a couple of hundred inhabitants, but it has four fine saloons in which drinking is conducted in the expansive manner traditional among frontier people everywhere. A good deal of drinking was done that day, and the miners worked themselves up to a steady simmer. "When the Mounties did arrive," Brough says, "they were met by a rather interesting horde who made it clear to them that if they took away the TV station, they wouldn't get very far with it."

The Mounties are famed more for dogged determination than lightning-

quick mental reflexes, but it nevertheless took them mere moments to dope out the odds and decide to make an orderly retreat. "That was our first big victory," says Brough.

"But they really were out to get me," he says. "The CBC sent up one big toughie from Thunder Bay once. I wouldn't exactly call him a hitman, but he did threaten to punch me out." Recently Brough managed to get hold of some bureaucrats' memos that showed exactly how panicked the establishment was. "At first they were very bland, like 'We understand that someone named David Brough has apparently set up a station...' but then they got more and more excited: 'Brough now open in Manitoba!' 'Brough in Saskatchewan!!' 'Brough in the Northwest Territories!!!'—each time with more exclamation marks."

In Long Lac, Ontario, the feds did succeed in knocking the station off the air. "They actually seized the transmitters," Brough says. "They came in with the Mounties and did it fast. We had been on the air only an hour, and since everybody was at work and they had a police escort, they were able to get out of town. But it was interesting to see how the community rallied. The people threatened to hold the northern version of a necktie party. The CBC did have a repeater station there [which simply passed along the signal of some other, more distant station], and the people were planning to dynamite it. In the end, the local council went down to Thunder Bay, about 250 miles away, and actually occupied the DOC's offices. The DOC had apparently heard about the original plan, which was to go down there with about 10 busloads of people—lumberjacks—to storm the offices. So they just cleared out. There weren't even any police."

Eventually, the feds crawled out from under their rocks long enough to return the equipment and apologize. "When we got back," Brough says, "we were met by a parade."

That sort of thing kept Brough going in the face of unceasing federal hassles. "We had a lot of people depending on us," he says. "You know, it wasn't always a great thing playing Robin Hood. It was traumatic at times. But we ended up becoming important to some of those little communities."


"Even the smallest station we had—for a town of 150 people—had its own local studio. We didn't just sell tapes to these people. We would do local news, amateur nights—always a great favorite—and bingo nights, which helped bring in some money. Sometimes the local news would be nothing much—a typical announcement would be like, 'If anybody's seen Billy, tell him to come on home; his dinner is waiting.' But one time a guy was banging on our door at

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New Channels

two in the morning because his trailer was on fire, and nobody could reach the volunteer firemen. So we took the movie off the air right away and put out a call for the volunteers. Then we stuck our little black & white camera out the window, aimed it down the road and covered the fire. It was the sort of thing that developed a community cohesiveness in those tiny outposts, and that was what kept us going."

But Brough's days were numbered. They *were* out to get him. Canada over the past 15 years—the Trudeau era—developed a mean streak of Big Brotherishness and dealt it out with the sort of heavyhandedness that has always given socialism a bad name. The Canadian government likes to devise solutions (without consultation), impose them (whether a problem exists or not), and apply them (without letup). Thus, CBC and the \$700 million or so it annually spends on generating viewer hostility. Thus the fact that Canada is probably the only country in the world that is planning *compulsory pay-TV*. A CBC cable channel is being devised (at calamitous expense) right now; it will be plugged into every cable household, like it or not, and viewers will pay for it, view it or not.

In that spirit the feds set out to squash Brough for good and all. Pretty soon he was appearing before the august panjandrums of the CRTC (a thumbsucking assembly of political dimebrains and academic doughballs) to explain why he shouldn't be hauled out on an ice floe and clubbed to death like a baby harp seal.

Brough, still the idealist, thought he had some good ideas for the lads. He wanted, as always, to be licensed and legal. He wanted to expand into somewhat larger outposts, towns that could offer a reasonable base of financial support. But he was willing to use the profits to subsidize the smaller stations. That way he'd be able to keep the shrimps on the air but also do away with bingo nights (Brough hates gambling). And all along the line he'd be providing services that people wanted and doing it for little money.

The hearings were pretty well-covered by the media at the time—this was about 1980—and the CRTC was mightily embarrassed. To avoid looking like fools to the entire nation, the body compromised, saying that it would not condone Brough's intolerable crimes, but it wouldn't step on him either. It would ignore him, tolerate him, let him alone. Then some smart cookie figured out a way to wipe him out legally. A few days after the first announcement came another: The CRTC *would* license Brough for a half-dozen of his stations. Victory?


Hardly. Six stations out of 60 made Brough 10-percent legal, if that matters.

More important, he says, "they licensed me for only the very small stations, the ones that needed to be subsidized. They wouldn't license me for any of the larger towns where I could make the money to subsidize the small stations. And they put conditions on the licenses that were incapable of fulfillment."

That about did it for Brough and his dream; he had to get into another line of work. But not, however, a legal one. Right away he went into selling and installing TVROs. Soon he was planting *dishes* from sea to shining sea, and driving bureaucrats crazy all over again. Actually, it wasn't that the dishes really were illegal, it was that the government couldn't decide about them. So it marked time by giving entrepreneurs a hard time. "But in the last year," Brough says, "private TVROs have finally been granted immunity. It seems so strange to me now, because for the past 10 or 15 years there were always the Mounties or some authority that wanted to throw us in jail."

Brough designed his own dish—a nifty lightweight job made of pie-wedge sheets of flat aluminum. Each wedge had holes punched in its long sides; little five-cent nuts and bolts held the wedges together. Surprise: The only way to make the holes in each wedge line up was to flex the wedges slightly, and once you flexed them, you had forced them into a dish. Unassembled, the whole item fit into a small shipping carton.

Now Brough's company—Commander Satellite Systems of Mississauga, Ontario—is making its dishes by the metal-spinning process, which is the same process the big boys use. It's also the same process used for making aluminum pots and pans. "If we don't make a go of the satellite business," Brough says, "we can always make giant woks." No need to worry. He's shipping dishes by the truckload these days. "Ninety-nine percent of what we sell is for private homes," he says, and much of it comes across the border to the U.S., where he is happy to do business.

Last September, in Nashville, Bob Cooper of Coop's Satellite Digest had a trade show for the TVRO industry, celebrating its continuing growth over five years. Coop decided it was time to honor pioneers in the industry, and he chose Brough as recipient of his Pioneer Award. No big deal, really—not like winning the lottery or the Nobel Prize. But it was an honor freely given by his peers, and Brough, the Johnny Appleseed of TV, is shyly proud of it, though it touches some sensitive nerves. "The Americans honor me for what I did," he says. "They call me a pioneer. What did they call me up here but a criminal? Instead of an award, they wanted to give me a piece of rope." 

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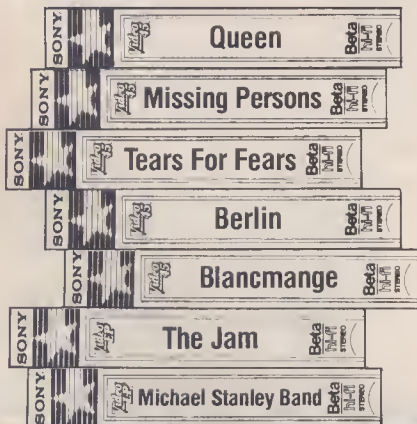
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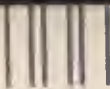
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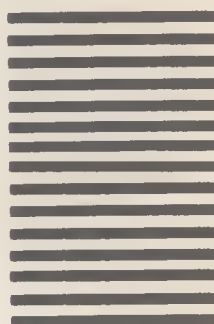
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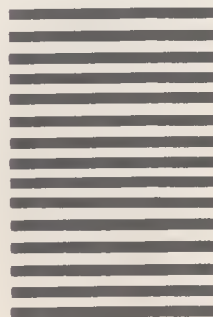
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Video's Guide to PROGRAMMING

NEWS & VIEWS

MPX = MTS + SAP — Is This the Formula For Stereo's Success?

Here we go again. After fighting among themselves for years to obtain an FCC blessing for stereo broadcast television, it's now every manufacturer and broadcaster for himself. And we who pay our money and take our chances are again hung out to dry.

Don't misunderstand me. I welcome the coming of TV broadcast stereo. It is going to have an important long term effect on video programming. If you have a Hi-Fi stereo recording VCR and have been enjoying the playback of a growing number of prerecorded Hi-Fi tape releases, stereo TV broadcasting can be expected to give you an important new recording and playback use for your equipment.

Instead of declaring that one form of stereo TV, if transmitted, shall be an inseparable part of the signal whenever it is carried, the FCC went only part of the way. It designated a particular multi-channel television sound (MTS) system but left the door open for other incompatible systems, as long as they do not interfere with the designated system. And while the TV manufacturers and broadcasters argued it out, the cablecasters now wiring over 40 percent of all the households having one or more TV sets remained uninvolved. At presstime, the FCC has before it the cablecasters' request for permission to strip off the MTS signals.

The MTS system will undoubtedly come to dominate—but at a terrible cost in confusion, complexity, and wasted expense in years to come. The FCC should have made a single decision the way it is supposed to do. You know the feeling: you have invested in a half-inch VCR and lots of tapes,



Illustrations by Lane Smith

and now along comes the 8mm video format. We will deal with 8mm on its merits; and I can defend this in a free marketplace and for matters in which the government has no standard-setting role. But we are talking about the public airwaves in which the FCC does have a responsibility.

TV manufacturers and broadcasters are falling all over themselves in the rush to beat out their competition with MTS equipment and TV transmissions. That there is little true stereo TV programming to transmit and receive seems to be secondary. We now see fine-print disclaimers for TV STEREO (capable) equipment and TV STEREO (simulated) broadcasting. Instead of approving MTS and then setting some appropriate future date at which it would go into effect—so TV manufactur-

ers, broadcasters, and program producers could properly gear up and coordinate—the FCC has declared open season on the unsuspecting consumer.

As originally designed, our TV broadcast system provided for only a single monaural audio channel. This channel remains untouched no matter what new system goes into effect. Your existing equipment will continue to work as it always has, even with stations broadcasting in stereo.

Any new TV audio system—whether MTS or anything else—involves tacking on one or more extra audio channels to the original broadcast signal. The term describing this process is “multiplexing” (MPX). Well before the FCC MTS decision, TV manufacturers started turning out TV receivers and other equipment with

By Ken Winslow

jacks or terminals marked "MPX." While some of these MPX-equipped sets are properly designed to pick off the MPX-encoded MTS signals from the standard broadcast transmission, others may not be.

An audio "simulcast" broadcast, which may be mono but is usually stereo, comes to you by a separate AM or FM radio station and is unrelated to the TV station's broadcast signal by MPX or any other means. All you need in this case is to watch the picture on your TV and listen to the sound from the radio station. Simulcasting will continue (and probably increase in the near term) for competitive reasons as individual stations about the country start MPX'ing stereo audio onto their signals.

"Simulated" stereo audio can mean several things. From time to time movies, concerts, and other programming are released with simulated-stereo audio tracks. Different frequencies are processed to create the *impression* of a left and right effect. Program companies don't always tell you when their stereo is simulated.

That a Beta or VHS videotape release is labeled as having two Hi-Fi audio tracks does not automatically mean stereo as the term is generally applied, i.e. left-and-right imaging. A lot of mono-track material is appearing on dual mono track Hi-Fi to take advantage of Hi-Fi's greater dynamic range, but there is no stereo separation. Some program companies such as RCA/Columbia and MCA are up-front in telling you this, but others are not. Some video companies are still under the impression that Hi-Fi automatically means stereo. It does not. All it means is dual tracks which can be dual mono or right-and-left stereo. Completely apart from what is transmitted or prerecorded, processing of a mono audio signal into simulated stereo can take place solely within your reception equipment. A variety of TV and accessory equipment is available to do this, ranging widely in effectiveness.

TV broadcasters about the country are now adding equipment to be able to transmit MPX-encoded MTS channels. Actually, the FCC-approved MTS system covers the addition of not two, but three MPX'ed audio channels. Two of them must be related to the video. The third's been designated as a separate audio program (SAP) channel which can cover any audio service, related or unrelated to the video, from a second language to radio paging. Each local broadcaster and each TV manufacturer can respectively choose to transmit or provide equipment reception for any combination of MTS and/or SAP audio signals. Stations are on, or coming on, the air with MTS/SAP in Chicago, Seattle, Los Angeles, New York City, Boston, St. Louis, Hartford (Connecticut), Sacramento (California), Salt Lake City (Utah), and other areas.

TV manufacturers are moving in two phases. They are generally starting to provide MTS/SAP outputs to which you can

attach accessory MPX decoder units which in turn are with or without their own built-in stereo amplifiers and which run in price from \$100 to \$200, from NEC's SA84A to Sony's MLV-1100. Major manufacturers such as RCA, Panasonic, and Zenith are building the entire MTS/SAP-encoded MPX reception, decoding, and two/three-channel system, including dual-channel amplification and speakers, into their TV receivers.

The key, of course, is the programming available. Among the networks, PBS has been the pioneer in the production and transmission of stereo programming which its local affiliates have been regularly simulcasting with locally cooperating AM and FM radio stations. But PBS stations generally do not have immediately available funds to install MTS/SAP encoding equipment. The first commercial network series to be produced and distributed in stereo has been NBC's *Tonight Show*. *Miami Vice*, now renewed for the 1985-86 season, is produced in stereo. Current motion pictures, most with stereo tracks, are a natural for both network and local stereo transmission. KTLA—Los Angeles began broadcasting weekly movies in MTS stereo last November. Promotionally minded sports producers can be expected to turn to stereo for crowd background sound. And when television MTS/SAP stereo broadcasting comes to your area, as it inevitably will, you will then be faced with the question of being able to use your VCR (either directly or with accessories) to record the stereo tracks. Stay tuned.

Good News, Bad News On HBO Scrambling

First the bad news for readers who have been getting a free ride from the satellite-distributed Home Box Office and Cinemax: scrambling is supposed to begin this month. The good news is that HBO is expected to set up a method whereby those beyond the reach of a cable or master-antenna system carrying HBO/Cinemax

can become subscribers in what amounts to a direct broadcast satellite (DBS) subscription service, offered to those whose dishes can "see" the Galaxy satellite.

Home Box Office started shipping some 10,000 M/A-Com Video Cipher 2 descrambling units to its HBO and Cinemax cable, hotel, and other affiliates during the second half of December. Authorized affiliates are getting use of these units free of charge. HBO has spent an estimated \$10 million to encode its two Galaxy satellite-distributed pay channels in a move to block home satellite receivers and many commercial establishments who have been using the signals without authorization.

One of the reasons the Video Cipher 2 version of the M/A-Com system has been adopted is that it offers the prospect of low-cost descrambling units that will be required for use by each home subscriber. This scrambling system, which has taken considerable effort to develop, is individually addressable. Don't pay your monthly bill and they can turn you off from on high. HBO is said to be working with other cable program services using the Galaxy satellite. The scrambling that starts with HBO and Cinemax can be expected to quickly spread to the other premium cable program services.

Kids Speak Out on Mr. T's Edutainment

Mr. T's Be Somebody. . . Or Be Somebody's Fool (MCA), aimed at elementary school-age children, has been relatively successful. Besides being both an entertaining and informative program for its intended age group as well as Mr. T. fans of all ages, this original made-for-video program has earned some money for MCA and provided a low-cost program that has become immediately popular for use by schools, libraries, and other organizations. MCA, like all the leading video companies, has tried a variety of original made-for-video programming but often has been disappointed on sales.

Mr. T., along with Valerie Landsburg and the musical group New Edition, uses a variety-show music, comedy, and breakdancing format to encourage young viewers to develop their own individuality and confidence, and to think for themselves instead of giving in to peer pressure. The fast-moving and well-produced program is organized into segments which include "Shyness," "Roots" (Mr. T. explains the symbolism of his chains), "Frustration," "Anger," "Styling" (if you're going to wear clothes with a "name" on them, it should be yours), "Saving Face," "Creating," and "Friendship." It's a program you can watch with your maturing children and use as a gentle springboard for discussion of many growing-up problems. The context of well-paced entertainment by a talented cast means it will become a repeatable program for use by children on their own.



VIDEO's Richard Jaccoma, a father of three, took a decidedly dim view of the tape and of Mr. T in general ("a media-born grotesquerie") in last month's "Video Clips" review. However, I loaned my copy to a family whose judgment I have come to respect. Michael, age eight and in the third grade, thought it was "funny and terrific because I like Mr. T." Aaron, age ten and in the seventh grade, thinks "it's a good video for children Michael's age." Jonathan, age thirteen, in the ninth grade and obviously already over the hill and on his way to becoming a critic, says "it teaches you a lot, but they should have used someone better than Mr. T., who cannot breakdance, sing, and cannot dress [properly]. It would be great for elementary [school ages] because of its content. Older children would concentrate only on the singing and dancing and not the message of the video." To which I can only add that for those of us who have done our growing up and are now trying to help others do the same, *Be Somebody* should suit your purpose to a "T."

'New Video' to Offer Independent Bonanza

For something really different, consider a project by New York City program retailer New Video (90 University Place, New York City 10003; 212-243-0400) to help independent film and video producers find a way to show you their works by means of home video. Organized and operated by former New York University students who maintain strong ties to the creative community that is centered in Greenwich Village, an opening catalogue of 25 Beta/VHS cassette titles has been assembled for mail-order sale as part of a New Video Independent Film & Video Series.

Unlike play-it-by-the-rules feature-film production from Hollywood and elsewhere, you will see an incredibly inventive variety of documentary, narrative, and performance techniques. The uptown Whitney Museum of American Art regularly showcases such works, having just concluded its "Paper Tiger Television" exhibition as one of a three-part current New American Filmmakers Series devoted to video. New Video has a special area set aside in its two stores for the rental of these titles. Perhaps you can encourage your local program store to handle them in the same way or even get your Public Library to include them in its video collection.

And what do these titles include? Well, lots of Les Blank films, for fans of the man regarded by many as America's leading documentarian. Those who enjoyed director Amos Poe's *Alphabet City* may want to see an earlier film of his, *The Foreigner*. Emile de Antonio's *Millhouse* is a satirical look back at the age of Nixon. And many other independent film and videomakers are represented—the best may well be the ones you've never heard of.

TOP 10 PROGRAMS

Cassette Sales

1. Purple Rain (-)*. Color. 1984. Prince, Morris Day, Apollonia Kotero. 113 min. (R) Beta, VHS (Hi-Fi stereo, closed captions). \$29.98. Warner.

2. The Empire Strikes Back (3). Color. 1980. Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher. 124 min. Beta, VHS (Hi-Fi stereo, closed captions). \$79.98. CBS/Fox.

3. Jane Fonda's Workout (1). Color. 1982. Jane Fonda assisted by 7 instructors. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Karl.

4. Raiders of the Lost Ark (4). Color. 1981. Harrison Ford, Karen Allen, Wolf Kahler. 115 min. Beta (Hi-Fi stereo, closed captions). VHS (stereo, cl. cap.). \$39.95. Paramount.

5. Star Wars (-). Color. 1977. Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher. 121 min. Beta. VHS (Dolby stereo). \$39.98 (reissue). CBS/Fox.

6. Jane Fonda's Prime Time Workout (-). Color. 1984. Less strenuous routines. 50 min. Beta, VHS (closed captions). \$39.95. Karl.

7. 48 HRS. (-). Color. 1982. Eddie Murphy, Nick Nolte, James Remar. 96 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Paramount.

8. Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (10). Color. 1982. William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, Ricardo Montalban. 113 min. (PG) Beta. VHS (stereo). \$39.95. Paramount.

9. Romancing the Stone (2). Color. 1984. Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner. 106 min. (PG) Beta, VHS (Hi-Fi, closed captions). \$79.98. CBS/Fox.

10. Trading Places (-). Color. 1983. Dan Aykroyd, Eddie Murphy, Jamie Lee

Curtis. 106 min. (R) Beta, VHS (closed captions). \$39.95. Paramount.

Videodisc Sales

1. The Empire Strikes Back (-)*. As above, "Cassette Sales." LV (stereo). \$29.98. CBS/Fox.

2. Romancing the Stone (1). As above, "Cass. Sales." LV. \$34.98. CED (closed captions). \$19.98. CBS/Fox.

3. Splash (3). Color. 1984. Tom Hanks, Daryl Hannah, John Candy. 109 min. LV (stereo). \$34.95. CED (stereo). \$29.95. Touchstone.

4. Never Cry Wolf (-). Color. 1983. Charles Martin Smith, Brian Dennehy. 105 min. (PG) LV. \$34.95. CED. \$24.95. Disney.

5. Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes (2). Color. 1984. Christopher Lambert, Ralph Richardson, Ian Holm. 130 min. (PG) LV (stereo, CX, Dolby MP matrix, closed captions). \$39.98. Warner.

6. Sixteen Candles (4). Color. 1984. Molly Ringwald, Paul Dooley, Carlin Glynn. 93 min. (PG) LV, CED. \$29.98. MCA.

7. Yentl (-). Color. 1983. Barbra Streisand, Amy Irving, Mandy Patinkin. 134 min. LV (stereo). \$34.98. CED (stereo, closed captions). \$34.98. CBS/Fox.

8. Against All Odds (9). Color. 1983. Rachel Ward, Jeff Bridges, James Woods. 122 min. (R) LV. \$34.95. CED. \$29.95. RCA/Columbia.

9. Firestarter (-). Color. 1984. David Keith, Drew Barrymore, George C. Scott. 115 min. (R) Beta (Hi-Fi). VHS (Dolby B). \$79.95. MCA.

10. Moscow on the Hudson (10). Color. 1984. Robin Williams, Maria Conchita Alonso, Cleavant Derricks. 115 min. (R) LV, CED. \$29.95. RCA/Columbia.

Cassette Rentals

1. The Empire Strikes Back (-)*. As above, "Cassette Sales." \$79.98. CBS/Fox.

2. Romancing the Stone (1). As above, "Cass. Sales." \$79.98. CBS/Fox.

3. Purple Rain (-). As above, "Cass. Sales." \$29.98. Warner.

4. Conan the Destroyer (-). Color. 1984. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Wilt Chamberlain, Grace Jones. 101 min. (PG) Beta (Hi-Fi, closed captions). VHS (Dolby B, cl. cap.). \$79.95. MCA.

5. Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes (2). As above, "Videodisc Sales." Beta, VHS (Hi-Fi stereo, closed captions). \$79.95. Warner.

6. Moscow on the Hudson (5). As above, "Disc Sales." Beta, VHS (Hi-Fi, closed captions). \$79.95. RCA/Columbia.

7. The Last Starfighter (-). Color. 1984. Lance Guest, Robert Preston, Dan O'Herlihy. 100 min. (PG) Beta (Hi-Fi stereo, surround sound). VHS (Dolby B stereo, surround). \$79.95. MCA.

8. Splash (3). As above, "Disc Sales." Beta (Hi-Fi stereo). VHS (stereo). \$79.95. Touchstone.

9. Never Cry Wolf (8). As above, "Disc Sales." Beta (Hi-Fi stereo). VHS (stereo). \$79.95. Disney.

10. The Philadelphia Experiment (9). Color. 1984. Michael Pare, Nancy Allen. 101 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$79.95. Thorn EMI.

*Number in parentheses indicates position last month; (-) indicates program is new listing. Copyright 1984 by Billboard Publications Inc. Reprinted by permission.

R E V I E W S



FILM CLIPS

Produced for Theaters



All of Me

Color. 1984. Steve Martin, Lily Tomlin, Victoria Tennant; dir. Carl Reiner. 98 min. Beta, VHS. \$79.95. Thorn EMI. Reproduction: B+

Ready to suspend your disbelief for a gentle story about mistaken identity?—to be specific, double identity. When Roger Cobb (Steve Martin)—lawyer by day, jazz guitarist by night—takes on dying, cantankerous Edwina Cutwater (Lily Tomlin) as a client, he doesn't expect her half-baked scheme to transfer her soul into the body of Terry (Victoria Tennant), the stablemaster's daughter, to work. And he sure doesn't expect a classic screwball-comedy screwup to land her in the right half of *his* body. But when he looks in a mirror, there she is, the old terror. He can't even take a leak without her putting the squeeze on him.

Why doesn't the premise wear thin? Physical comedy is the answer, a genre as

old as film itself. Martin's left half is a man, his right half a woman. John Cleese would envy his silly walks, as any comic would envy his facial contortions and persistently contradictory body language: *he becomes two people*. Tomlin, as his internal nemesis, creates a counter persona so strong that even when no mirrors are around and Roger speaks Edwina's lines, she is still there, though unseen and unheard. To get out of this mess, they eventually must learn to cooperate (among other things, she's got control of his strumming hand). Oh yes—they even fall in love.

The VHS cassette sported very accurate color but also had blinding contrast. However, that is an inherent visual characteristic of the movie.

—Mark Fleischmann

The Woman in Red

Color. 1984. Gene Wilder, Charles Grodin, Kelly Le Brock, Joseph Bologna, Michael Huddleston, Judith Ivey; dir. Wilder. 87 min. Beta, VHS. \$79.95. Vestron. Reproduction: A-

This is a funny little movie about deception and friendship, and with the help of a strong cast it's Gene Wilder's best since leaving the Mel Brooks fold. It doesn't hurt that Wilder is blessed with a funny face. All he has to do is look into the camera and smile. As one character in *Red* says, "Look at the eyes, look at the nose; the way it sparkles. What more could you want in a guy?"

Wilder plays Teddy Pierce, an advertising exec confronted with midlife. One routine day he spots a stunning model (Kelly Le Brock) dancing on a vent in a parking garage while her dress blows up somewhere around her shoulders (a thoughtful nod to the classic fantasy girl, Marilyn Monroe). Teddy decides to go after her—all in the name of freedom and adventure, you understand. Standing in the way are his wife Didi (Judith Ivey), who's hidden a shiny gun in their bedroom and shoots a big

hole in a pair of Teddy's undershorts while they're discussing infidelity; a vengeful co-worker (Gilda Radner, ranging from homely to hideous to horrific); bad weather; a surprise party; and a gurgling, gushing waterbed.

Teddy's not alone. His married pal Joey (Joseph Bologna) has been cheating on his wife for years. His single pal Mikey (Michael Huddleston) is seeing the wife of a doctor who specializes in all-night surgery. Even Teddy's gay pal Buddy (Charles Grodin, in another winning performance) rocks the conjugal boat. But Teddy and his pals also fool themselves, discovering the lonely side of the freedom they covet. A nice touch pops up now and then as director Wilder punctuates this deception with the disembodied whine of a seagull and the sound of the surf, a deft stab at Erich Fromm's *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. Friendship is the other thread running through *Red*. However often Teddy and his pals deceive themselves and their wives, they never cross each other. They're loyal and supportive even in the face of sure disaster.

The soft electropop/funk/disco soundtrack, composed by Stevie Wonder and performed by Wonder and Dionne Warwick, came home clear and clean on the VHS transfer, though the bottom end was a little lean (even a 20-band equalizer couldn't pump up the bass portion of the rhythm tracks). As for color, you need only look at "The Woman" herself—rich auburn hair, blue eyes, and that red red dress. Yes, color is just fine. —William Wolfe

It Happened One Night

B&W. 1934. Clark Gable, Claudette Colbert, Walter Connolly; dir. Frank Capra. 105 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. RCA/Columbia. Reproduction: B

No one expected *It Happened One Night* to rate more than a footnote in the history of Columbia Pictures (which in 1934 made films with such low budgets that the studio

was called Poverty Row). Not Clark Gable, who did it only because he was being loaned out by MGM. Not Claudette Colbert, who agreed to costar only after every other major Hollywood actress contemptuously turned it down—and even then demanded twice her normal salary and a four-week shooting schedule so she could get to Sun Valley by Christmas. And not even Frank Capra, who had so much trouble putting the project together that when he finally started shooting he “felt like the overtrained fighter who left his fight in the gym.” But it was a smash hit, and Oscars went to Gable, Colbert, Capra, and screenwriter Robert Riskin—the last time one picture would win the quadruple crown until *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, 40 years later.

Capra has written that this was the only time Gable was allowed to play himself—“the fun-loving, boyish, attractive, he-man rogue.” It’s really *The Taming of the Shrew*, after all. Colbert is a spoiled heiress who’s taken down a peg or two by the roughhousing Gable, a newspaper reporter sharing a bus with her to New York. They fall in love after spending the night (chastely, of course) in a roadside inn separated by a blanket on a clothesline cord. When Gable imagines Colbert undressing behind “the walls of Jericho,” it becomes the sexiest *boudoir* scene ever choreographed for twin beds.

The VHS release tape appears to have been assembled from several sources. Scenes vary in density and sharpness, with some shots so soft-focused that much definition is lost. (This might have resulted from enlarging a 16mm image when no suitable negative or 35mm print existed.) There is also the occasional momentary freeze-frame effect when visual material might’ve been “stretched” to cover missing frames. These things don’t detract from *It Happened One Night*—only from its perfect preservation. —Harvey Elliott

Ninotchka

B&W. 1939. Greta Garbo, Melvyn Douglas; dir. Ernst Lubitsch. 110 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. MGM/UA. Reproduction: A-

“Must you flirt?” “I don’t have to, but I find it natural.” “Suppress it.”

The lukewarm response to Streep and De Niro’s *Falling in Love* suggests that love stories like this can’t be filmed anymore—that modern restraint is no substitute for good old-fashioned repression. The elusive Garbo belongs to another age; Paris lost its innocence to pillaging Nazis; modern audiences have too much knowledge and too few dreams. But in 1939, a comedy genius like director Ernst Lubitsch could still match icy Greta Garbo against suave Melvyn Douglas in the city of romance to create a deathless comic tale of the heart. (And as late as 1957, Fred Astaire could dare a remake.)

The script—cowritten by Billy Wilder, which is probably where it got its cutting

edge—casts Garbo as the eponymous Soviet bureaucrat sent by Razinin (Bela Lugosi, in a brief appearance) to rescue the state’s effort to sell off Princess Swana’s (Ina Claire) crown jewels from the bungling of the hilarious trio of Iranoff (Sig Rumann), Buljanoff (Felix Bressart), and Kopalski (Alexander Granach), who have been seduced by cigarette girls and other capitalist comforts in their posh hotel. She comes up against Swana’s agent Count Leon (Douglas), only to be seduced herself. Leave the loaded question of whether Russians are all either frigid authoritarians or floundering numbskulls to political purists and just enjoy the ride. (Ninotchka to a porter who offers to carry her bags: “That’s social injustice!” Porter: “That depends on the tip.”) And take comfort in Garbo’s portrayal of a woman of intelligence and toughness who loses neither when she thaws out.

Political realism, in any event, was never the point of any Lubitsch comedy. Indeed, by sending Ninotchka on a mission to scrounge up money to feed starving Russians in a year of crop failures, the story emphasizes the need for nurturing dreams in a world that was, and is, dangerous and unfair. Thanks, MGM/UA, for the memories. Thanks, too, for a decent VHS transcription of this B&W gem from the vaults, among the first in a “Diamond Jubilee Collection” of film classics.

—Mark Fleischmann

Mr. Hulot’s Holiday

B&W. 1953. Starring & dir. Jacques Tati. 86 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Embassy. Reproduction: B+

Embassy’s purchase of the Janus Films collection—a boon to videophiles—means that the gentle French comedies of Jacques Tati will walk their odd walk into America’s small screens, much as Tati himself would do. With a long Gallic nose and ever-present pipe, Tati was his own leading man in

four films made from the early ’50s to the late ’60s; had he not been haunted by financial troubles, he might have made more. Legal problems kept his movies out of circulation for a long time, so when they played revival houses a couple of years back, it was a cinemaphile’s event on a par with the five Hitchcock re-releases.

Mr. Hulot’s Holiday gave moviegoers their first glimpse of Tati’s strange goose-step. Titles at the film’s head invite the audience to see the world through Tati/Hulot’s eyes: “See how many people you can recognize. You might even recognize yourself.” And as the holiday (at a French beach resort) begins, we meet them, lots of them: the porky truculent one, the old couple, the pretty blonde girl, the young Marxist, countless others—but above all, the children. In Tati’s films even adults are children, and to truly love his work means recapturing the innocence needed to appreciate his perpetual visual pranks.

A riding crop under Hulot’s arm skews one picture on the wall even as he straightens another. A man in a wheelchair is turned so that he slaps cards down on the wrong gaming table, and the resulting row is so angry he gets up and shouts with the rest. A whole shed of fireworks is set alight. Hulot kicks Mr. Truculent in the butt. Children throw sand. And in general, Tati’s Law prevails: anything that can go wrong, will—except when it shouldn’t, as when a tiny child, hidden by an ice-cream cart, hands up his money and takes two cones, one for a friend. He emerges and takes the cones up to a door, one of them tipping precariously as he turns the knob. But it doesn’t fall. He makes it—Tati is mischievous, but never cruel. He treated the world better than it treated him. With his kindly outlook and visual flair, he was Charlie Chaplin’s truest heir and Ernie Kovacs’ only real antecedent.

Embassy’s VHS transfer makes *Hulot* look better than it did in the theater, and though the English-language dub drops its reproduction rating to B+, the film’s clas-



sical reliance on purely visual comedy makes the question of dubbing versus titling—for once—purely academic. Watch and revel. —Mark Fleischmann

The Natural

Color. 1984. Robert Redford, Glenn Close, Robert Duvall, Kim Basinger; dir. Barry Levinson. 134 min. Beta, VHS. \$79.95. RCA/Columbia. Reproduction: B+

If there ever was a vehicle for an aging movie idol, *The Natural* is it. Robert Redford plays Roy Hobbs, a baseball player with Cal Ripken Jr. potential. He fails to fulfill it because he was shot by an ingenue for no apparent reason in a hotel room during his major-league tryout. The original Bernard Malamud novel drew on a real incident in which Eddie Waitkus was shot by a woman.

The movie, however, is a cinematic cheat as a fantasy (though it might have made it as drama), one which digs deep for pathos and *angst*. We're to sympathize with Hobbs because he got a bum deal and he's trying to make a comeback at 35. Fair enough—but the movie is oh-so-slow-motion and self-indulgent in every other cinematographic way. Redford swings and hits line drives in slow motion. He pitches in slow motion. The movie would be better seen in fast forward. The colors are autumnal, the print is intentionally dark, and this is supposed to mean we are dealing with somber material. I saw this film three times: in the cinema, on an airplane, and on tape, and it got worse every time. (I kept going back, I suppose, because I'm an incurable baseball fanatic.)

The problem is in the fantasy. We're reminded of it so often, we stop believing anything. Redford wants his character to be larger than life, yet it doesn't work. Baseball clichés are acted out; the cover is literally torn off the ball, and lightning signals the ensuing home runs. Hobbs, of course, loses his sweetheart (Glenn Close), but though there are "some mistakes we never stop paying for," miraculously wins her back. Robert Duvall does the only real acting as a nasty, powerful sportswriter. He has one great scene with Glenn Close where he tries to in-

Tightrope



terview her in a hospital corridor.

The press widely reported that Redford actually parked one during the filming of this movie, at a minor-league stadium in Buffalo, New York. Had he swung and missed, perhaps he wouldn't have been carried away. Baseball nuts will note in the credits Joe Charboneau, a former rookie of the year from Cleveland who once had great promise but had only that one season in the sun. His autobiography might have made a better movie than this one. —Doug Garr

Streets of Fire

Color. 1984. Michael Pare, Diane Lane, Amy Madigan; dir. Walter Hill. 93 min. Beta, VHS. \$69.95. MCA. Reproduction: A

Streets of Fire is a Western about a renegade gunslinger who returns from exile to rescue his old flame, a saloon singer who's been abducted by a gang of outlaws, and in the process wipes out the bad guys and, with the help of his trusty sidekick, cleans up Dodge City. Sort of.

Except it's not set in the West. It's set in a never-never-land of neon and elevated railways, of rock music and retro fashions, of corny aphorisms masquerading as contemporary hero talk. *Streets of Fire*—unlike the inferior promo video released several months ago—is an exciting idea brilliantly brought to the screen by Walter Hill, a renegade filmmaker who is one of our most daring visual stylists.

Sometimes I felt I was watching *One from the Heart* during Leather Week. At other times I was convinced this was a remake of *High Noon*. *Streets of Fire* is as mythic as anything John Wayne ever served up, and Hill reinvents the gunslinger in an amplified style, replacing old-fashioned wipes with lightning-quick zig-zags that send us hurtling from one scene to another. The sound (top-notch Dolby stereo) takes us from a rock & roll concert

hall to a street rumble to a love clinch in the pouring rain with overwhelming audio fidelity.

This isn't an intellectual's movie, and it's not for rock fans either. In fact, the concert sequences—well-shot but as extraneous as the Western prototype's saloon songs—are only as good as the music, while the stylization of relationships and dialogue imbues the rest of the movie with an instant gratification that comes from seeing something done with energy and instinct. Michael Pare is an effective mystery figure as the reluctant but determined hero, and Amy Madigan is great riding shotgun. (This is an extremely versatile actress; have you seen her schoolteacher in *Places in the Heart*?)

Junk the 40-minute music video you might have already bought and see the real thing. The full-length *Streets of Fire* has been handsomely transferred on VHS. The neon lines are sharp, the fast-moving images don't blur, and the production design isn't shortchanged by reduction to the small screen. Zzzzip! It's an electric entertainment. —Harvey Elliott

Tightrope

Color. 1984. Clint Eastwood, Genevieve Bujold, Alison Eastwood; dir. Richard Tuggle. 115 min. Beta, VHS. \$79.95./LV. \$34.98. Warner. Reproduction: B+

Clint Eastwood stars in this jittery, kinky thriller as Wes Block, a New Orleans homicide detective. Although Eastwood invested a good deal of his time and his effort in *Tightrope*, he reportedly had serious doubts about its commercial viability. His doubts are understandable because the film's central thesis is one few people find palatable. One of the characters states it clearly: "There's a darkness in all of us. Some have it under control, others act it out, the rest of us try to walk a tightrope between the two." Here the darkness is murderous rage, per-

The Natural



verse eroticism, anger toward women. It is just one measure of the film's quirkiness that the lines quoted above are delivered by a black female assistant D.A.

Block is a fleshed-out, infinitely more believable version of Eastwood's usual flat studies in sadism and alienation—Dirty Harry *et al.* He actually has a home life complete with a marriage gone to the dogs, two young daughters whom he's raising alone, a drinking problem, a girlfriend who's a rape counselor and feminist, and—possibly because of all the above—an occasional need for the companionship of prostitutes. But his personal problems are nothing compared to his work problem: a homicidal maniac who rapes and murders women in New Orleans' red light district.

As Block hunts the killer and eventually realizes that *he* is being hunted in turn, a horrid truth begins to dawn on him (and us): the killer is a grotesque everyman, acting out the sexual rage embedded deep in our psyches. But *Tightrope* is neither a psychoanalytic homily nor a liberal prayer—no plea for the healing power of mercy here. The film simply recognizes that our society nurtures a snakepit of hatred between men and women. Block works through his anger for his ex-wife by having kinky sex with prostitutes, but the killer's rage is out of control. He has fallen off the tightrope.

Most slice 'em-dice 'em films succeed by playing to their audiences' submerged perversities. *Tightrope* is honestly something more—a film as much about misogyny as murder, a brilliant meditation on the real sense of the clichéd notion that we are all killers. It is literally a *film noir*, much of its action taking place in the heat of the New Orleans night.

The transfer was done carefully—the dark, moody images were seldom murky. The VHS Hi-Fi soundtrack was well-produced.

—Richard Jaccoma

Robin Hood

Color. 1973. **Animated.** 83 min. **Beta, VHS.** \$79.95. **ILV.** \$34.95. **CED.** \$29.95. **Disney.** **Reproduction:** A

Whatever Disney Video does is news—confusing news. Adding to its other special collections, the company has announced a new “classics” series to release its cartoon features—though it already released *Dumbo* years ago, which is more of a classic than this “premiere” title, *Robin Hood*.

Robin Hood, a late Disney effort coming after *The Aristocats*, doesn't have the vividly memorable characters or sequences of Disney's truest classics—but it's bright, fast-paced, and has some well-choreographed sight gags plus a good helping of lighthearted Disney fun. Robin is a suave Errol Flynn-type fox, and the villains are a lion king (voice of Peter Ustinov) and a leavably wicked snake, Sir Hiss (Terry-Thomas). On the flipside, the Britishers are joined by typical Disney rustics: Little John (Phil Harris), Alan-a-Dale (Roger Miller), and Friar Tuck (Andy Devine). It's an

odd ethnic mix, but then again, the love interest between two smiling, fanged foxes (Robin and Marian) is strange too.

Adults will appreciate the story: the king is bleeding the peasants dry with taxation. The Disney cartoon faces are most expressive and touching when we see the village working animals saddened, hungry, and gaunt, giving up their last pennies to the nasty taxman. Foxy Robin must save them—and prevent Friar Tuck from being killed by the irreligious king. The animation lines are a little more scratchy than the fluid work of earlier cartoons, but the backgrounds are lush and every scene is splashy and colorful. Several happy characters cry out “Oooh da lolly!” (1973's zipadeedoodah?). This mild adventure might not affect you the same way, but you'll have a smile on your face.

—Ron Smith



Blood Feast

Color. 1963. **Thomas Wood, Mal Arnold, Connie Mason; dir. Herschell Gordon Lewis.** 75 min. **Beta, VHS.** \$29.95. **Continental.** **Reproduction:** A

2000 Maniacs

Color. 1964. **Connie Mason, Thomas Wood; dir. Herschell Gordon Lewis.** 70 min. **Beta, VHS.** \$29.95. **Continental.** **Reproduction:** B

Color Me Blood Red

Color. 1964. **Don Joseph, Candi Conder, Elyn Warner; dir. Herschell Gordon Lewis.** 70 min. **Beta, VHS.** \$29.95. **Continental.** **Reproduction:** B+

There has never been a film as disgusting and as hilarious as *Blood Feast*. The mind boggles at the nerve of filmmaker Herschell Gordon Lewis, who, in the early 1960s, saw limits to softcore sex films and decided the only way a true independent filmmaker could outdo the Hollywood studios would be to give the public something Hollywood wouldn't dare touch. Gore became his specialty, and *Blood Feast* the first of a trilogy of films as blatantly repulsive as they are screamingly funny. Lewis

punctuates his movies with dismemberment; entrails are his entertainment, and if you think Steven Spielberg was the first director to yank a beating heart out of a man's chest, think again. Lewis did it 20 years ago.

He also assembled the worst bunch of actors ever to grace the screen for his cast, and the lines they're given to say would choke Meryl Streep. We're talking inept. A former Playmate of the Month plays the romantic lead in *Blood Feast* and *2000 Maniacs* (which means she's the only one who doesn't get mutilated), and the rest of the characters act as if they were reading from cue cards stuck on the desks and walls. You're too busy laughing to mind the blood—when you're not too dumbstruck to laugh.

Fade in on *Blood Feast*. A buxom blonde with teased hair steps into her bathtub. She takes a book with her, and sets it on the side of the tub. Closeup on book's title: “Ancient Weird Religious Rites.” (These peroxide intellectuals are a surprise a minute.) What follows is an insane murder plot tied to an ancient ceremony paying tribute to a goddess of blood wherein various organs from various virgins are boiled in a pot and served at a special feast which will bring the goddess back to life. A Florida socialite—all Lewis' movies are filmed in Florida, and all his actors have flat Southern accents—wants to throw a party for her daughter Suzette and gets talked into an Egyptian theme by a caterer with a severe limp and shoe-polish eyebrows. Guess what goddess he represents.

There is not a wasted frame, not a dead moment (pardon the expression) in *Blond Feast*—the fastest, most laugh-packed 75 minutes you'll spend this year. The other two Lewis films are an anticlimax: *2000 Maniacs* gets bogged down in ersatz-*Tobacco Road* local color in its revenge tale about a Dixie Brigadoon which reappears 100 years after the Civil War to pay back the Yankees for what they done way back when. Better is *Color Me Blood Red*, the story of a manic-depressive painter who gets possessed by the search for an “ideal red,” and finds it when his model/assistant pricks her finger. Before long, he's painting with the side of her dead face and milking another girl's intestines to fill his palette. But it's a strangely slow film, with lots of moody agonizing. (For more details see Tom Soter's “The Best of the Worst,” November 1984.)

Continental's triple release looks pretty good. The print of *Blood Feast* seems brand-new, and though live sound recording hampers *2000 Maniacs* and *Color Me Blood Red*—especially the former, which needs an extra spurt from the volume control—color is fine and doesn't betray Lewis' budgets. (He never believed in shooting in 16mm, so in his way he was first-class.) There's lots of red throughout, naturally, and these cassettes don't bleed at all—even when everything else does.

—Harvey Elliott

QUICK TAKES/FILM

The Paris Express

Color. 1953. Claude Rains, Herbert Lom, Marta Toren; dir. Harold French. 83 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Maljack/MPI. Reproduction: B+

The unsung Claude Rains stars in this low-keyed pot-simmerer about a good man gone bad. When Rains, a dedicated and straightlaced bookkeeper, learns that his employer's corruption threatens his own future, he becomes enraged. He kills the boss (or does he?) and flees to Paris with a wad of loot. There he falls prey to a cat lady of indeterminate origin (Marta Toren) and evades the law long enough to enjoy one night of immorality. Despite a bogus train leitmotif and the worst dream sequence I've ever seen, *The Paris Express*, from a story by Georges Simenon, moves along nicely at its own speed. —John Leland

The Threepenny Opera

B&W. 1931. Rudolph Foerster, Carola Nehr, Lotte Lenya; dir. G.W. Pabst. 111 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Embassy. Reproduction: B

Though director G.W. Pabst eliminated most of Weill/Brecht's immortal score and radically altered Brecht's plot—Mack the Knife as a bank president?; it's almost *too* appropriate—his loose adaptation of musical theater's most lustrous gem is worth seeing just because it provides an audiovisual record of Lotte Lenya doing "Pirate Jenny." Janus Films' English title translation is a mess, and the VHS tape occasionally crops the titles at the edges—but apart from that this is a good rendering of very difficult source material, full of primitive lighting and extreme contrast. That it exists at all is a miracle: the Nazis destroyed the original negative and all existing prints in the '30s, leaving only the negative used for this release. They didn't want you to see this film.

—Mark Fleischmann

Paris Blues

B&W. 1962. Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Sidney Poitier, Diahann Carroll; dir. Martin Ritt. 98 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.98. Key. Reproduction: A-

This earnest love story, set among American expatriate jazz musicians in Paris just as the beat generation were dying out, is a minor Martin Ritt film written by his blacklisted collaborator Walter (The Front) Bernstein. It wants its characters to make important observations about responsibility, roots, and illusory freedoms, but the two couples who illustrate these morals are so lightly drawn that they're only mouthpieces. The men live in Paris, and the women meet them on holiday and try to change them. It's dull. But the jazz score by Duke Ellington isn't, and if the milieu of



coffeehouse Paris is a little antiseptic, it still swings with authentic jazz. The VHS audio well serves the soundtrack, and the picture's in black & white—in more ways than one. —Harvey Elliott

Love Letters

Color. 1983. Jamie Lee Curtis, James Keach; dir. Amy Jones. 89 min. Beta, VHS. \$79.95. Vestron. Reproduction: B

A woman finds her dead mother's old love letters (*not* from her father), and tries to capture their emotions for herself through an ill-considered affair with a married man. How do you make this improbable love story palatable? Not by starring Jamie Lee Curtis, a cold fish here, though the film's thickheaded masochistic heroine doesn't give her much room to work. Speaking of masochists, they'll love the clichéd angst, the pointless and passionless nude scenes, and the waste of James Keach as the lover. Director Amy Jones was also responsible for *Slumber Party Massacre*; 'nuff said. —Steven Grant

Stay Hungry

Color. 1976. Jeff Bridges, Sally Field, Arnold Schwarzenegger; dir. Bob Rafelson. 102 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.98. CBS/Fox. Reproduction: B

This shaggy black-sheep story is similar to director Rafelson's *Five Easy Pieces*, but despite its impressive pedigree—the movie is based on a National Book Award-nominated novel—it never takes off, despite winning performances by Jeff Bridges and Sally Field, and a rather ingenuous one by Arnold Schwarzenegger (pre-*Conan*). Once again our hero has turned his back on family money, working on a sleazy real-estate deal that leads him to bodybuilders, bluegrass fiddlers, and a cockeyed love affair amidst the splendors of his big old Dixie mansion. Filmed in Birmingham, Alabama, the film nonetheless seems Hollywood-Southern, straining for flavor

with a script that's woefully inadequate. The CBS/Fox tape is pallid and noisy, like the ever-present whir of air conditioners.

—Harvey Elliott

Krull

Color. 1983. Ken Marshall, Lysette Anthony; dir. Peter Yates. 121 min. Beta, VHS. \$79.95./CED. \$19.95. RCA/Columbia. Reproduction: A

Excalibur? Star Wars? Robin Hood? Zardoz? The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad? Abbott & Costello meet the Feudal Future? Pick any of the above for an idea of at least part of Krull, possibly the most inept SFantasy adventure film made since the advent of modern special effects. Nothing is interesting in this blot on the career of Peter Yates (Bullitt, The Deep, Breaking Away)—all the more surprising since adventure cinema of any stamp should be his meat. —M. George Stevenson

The Last Starfighter

Color. 1984. Lance Guest, Robert Preston; dir. Nick Castle. 100 min. Beta, VHS. \$79.95. MCA. Reproduction: B

This warmed-over *Star Wars* has two pluses: an engaging appearance by Robert Preston as an interstellar conman (a la *The Music Man*) and wonderful computer-generated special effects. But there are also tepid performances from most everyone (especially the wooden-faced lead, Lance Guest) and a rambling, too-fast script. After a while you feel like you're watching a video game or an episode of *Lost in Space*. Reproduction is fine except for bad color contrast at the beginning. The titles are dark blue on a black background—not the best choice for clarity. —Tom Soter

Dreamscape

Color. 1984. Dennis Quaid, Max von Sydow, Kate Capshaw; dir. Joseph Ruben. 99 min. Beta, VHS. \$79.95. Thorn EMI. Reproduction: B+

They say if you die in your dreams, your system can't bear it and you die for real. Thereupon hinges this political/sci-fi adventure which goes *Brainstorm* one better and allows a man to enter and participate in another man's dreams. It's the theory of *Dreamscape* that using this "linking," silent assassins can control the earth. It's easy to figure out the whole movie by the time Dennis Quaid has fingered the two villains (shifty eyes all around). Special effects are cheesy, with a sub-Harryhausen dragon making several unwelcome appearances and the rest just hypnotic swirls and post-apocalyptic nuclear devastation. But the VHS Hi-Fi is great, albeit with an image that turns grainy with regularity. —Harvey Elliott

The Prisoner

Color. 1967. Patrick McGoohan, Leo McKern, Angelo Muscati; dir. McGoohan, others. 17 50-min. episodes. Beta, VHS. \$39.95 each. Maljack/MPI.

The Prisoner is not namby-pamby about paranoia: "Where am I?" "In the Village." "What do you want?" "Information." "Whose side are you on?" "That would be telling. We want information." (Information. INFORMATION!)

"You won't get it!" "By hook or by crook, we will." "Who are you?" "The new Number Two." "Who is Number One?" "You are Number Six." "I am not a number. I am a free man!" (Laughter, very demonic.)

The bit quoted above—ostensibly the watchery of a British secret agent who, after inexplicably resigning, is kidnapped and sequestered in "the Village"—is also the cry of an era, those fabulous, turbulent, paranoid '60s, when mistrust of any and all authority was the norm. While Number Six (series star, producer, and *auteur* Patrick McGoohan) cannot escape or discover the identity of Number One until the final episode, with those answers hardly conclusive, he is never broken and the "system" is never cracked. Everyone is suspect, no one is in charge—yet the weight of oppression stifles everything and the masters have total control.

In one of the most pointed episodes the Village is revealed to have, along with "democratic" elections, a "free" press and other such trappings of "normal" Western society, a kind of Maoist re-education program using peer pressure to force Number Six out of his "unsocial" ways. Just as the continual "brainwashing" incidents show a mistrust of, and naive amazement at, the power of science, so this can be read two ways: as a condemnation of these techniques in other ("communistic") societies or as a 1984ish vision of their roots in our own. The Village is not only a prison camp decked out as a perky Welsh seaside resort (which the location is), but a microcosm of political life ambiguous enough to exemplify the paranoia felt in Western and

VIDEO CLIPS

Produced for Home Viewing

Eastern-style governance by ruling and ruled alike.

McGoohan's vision owes a great deal to the Sean Connery James Bond films, his own two previous series (*Danger Man* and *Secret Agent*), and the burgeoning popularity of Latin American fiction. For all the thrills, spills, and baroque plot structures (including one where Number Six is reprogrammed to believe he is Number Twelve, his double, and told to pretend he is Number Six—Borges, anyone?), the overall message recalls Thoreau: the individual who sticks to his guns will not fall but triumph by means of his greater moral purpose and stalwartness. Number Six is that kind of man, a James Bond/John Wayne amalgam who, in another episode, indeed becomes a secret agent/cowboy figure all at once. His development over the course of the series from a disoriented pawn, kept going only by his will to survive, to a prisoner in command of the prison's mental game is a parable of '60s humanism under siege from all sides. And as Number Six becomes more commanding, the Number Twos get loonier and more afraid of the cost of their failure; so when Number Six finally does escape, one presumes that his ideals too have their way—as the spirit of individualism has always found a way.

While at times maddeningly obscure or a touch obvious, there's no question that *The Prisoner* is television art at its best, its very best. No other broadcast series has so consistently challenged one's intellect

and moral sense while also remaining entertaining.

Apart from the color quality of the 17-one-hour VHS preview cassettes, which is a bit on the mid-'60s fluorescent side, my only caution to the consumer is to view the episodes in the sequence indicated by the packaging. Particularly with the last two episodes—one virtually incomprehensible without the other—order is important, as it is in demonstrating the development discussed above. So watch out, or it'll be off to the Village for you as well.

—M. George Stevenson

The Return of the Man From U.N.C.L.E.

Color. 1983. Robert Vaughn, David McCallum, Patrick Macnee, Anthony Zerbe; dir. Ray Austin. 96 min. Beta, VHS. \$69.95. Trans World Entertainment (6430 Sunset Blvd., Suite 501, Hollywood, Cal. 90028; 213-461-0467).

"It's a reflection of what's happening in our times," sighs the grey-haired man (Anthony Zerbe) wistfully. "It is difficult for men of flair to survive in our society." If they had nothing else, Napoleon Solo and Illya Kuryakin, the men from U.N.C.L.E., had flair. And so did the 1964-68 series, a cult show that went through an "U.N.C.L.E.-mania" period in 1965-66 when Solo's amused eyebrows appeared on lunchboxes, Illya's blonde locks graced "action dolls," and the stars themselves were mobbed in personal appearances throughout the country.

As part of TV's remembrance (and exhumation) of successes past, producer/writer Michael Sloan, a longtime fan of the original show, created *The Return of the Man from U.N.C.L.E.: The 15 Years Later Affair*, an affectionate updating that always stays well above the lows of such recent revivals as *The Wild Wild West Revisited* and *Escape from Gilligan's Island*. With the help of such talented '60s TV-series luminaries as director Ray Austin (*The Saint*), composer Gerald Fried (*Star Trek*, *U.N.C.L.E.*), and guest star Patrick Macnee (*The Avengers*), Sloan has captured the panache of the original show: "How many times did we save the world?" asks Illya. "Constantly," says Solo. And Sloan gets some sly jokes out of the heroes' ages and the changing times they face: "What happened to the special U.N.C.L.E. gun?" asks Solo. "It's in the special U.N.C.L.E. wing of the Smithsonian," quips a beautiful weapons expert.

But Sloan never humiliates or sentimentalizes his protagonists. He fondly recalls their past antics to produce a good adventure epic which—while not up to the series' greatest moments—offers much. Among the best touches: stylish nut Anthony Zerbe, who has a vendetta against Solo, and a guest shot by former James Bond George Lazenby as a spy in an Aston Martin known only as "JB."

Vaughn and McCallum still make a great





team, even if age has added an element of doubt to their characters' handling of the quips, girls, and gadgets (Vaughn looks the older of the two). If nothing else, the TV movie is worth watching for the best-remembered flourishes of the old show: the jazzy Jerry Goldsmith theme, the "swish pans" with title cards announcing "Somewhere in...", and those crazy acronyms: U.N.C.L.E. (United Network Command for Law and Enforcement) and T.H.R.U.S.H. (Technological Hierarchy for the Repression of Undesirables and the Subjugation of Humanity). It's enough to make one teary-eyed with relief. I mean, there should be *some* constants in the world.

The bad news about this tape is the reproduction: the colors are flat, and there are tears in the film, as well as scratches, dirt, and color bursts. —Tom Soter

The Best of Upstairs, Downstairs

Vols. 1 & 2 of 14-vol. video series. Color. 1971. Gordon Jackson, Angela Baddeley, Jean Marsh, Evin Crowley, Rachel Gurney, David Langton; dir. Raymond Menmuir. 50 min. each. Beta, VHS. \$29.95 each. Thorn EMI.

It's difficult in an age of Muzak, Chinese takeout, and nuclear threat to work up a sweat over the servant problem. But not impossible, as demonstrated by the popularity of *Upstairs, Downstairs* on both sides of the Atlantic. Like so many British series we've come to love via PBS, it is essentially a soap opera—but a classy one.

Volume 1, "On Trial," introduces the domestic staff, with a tantalizing glimpse of Lady Marjorie and the master. The power structure below-stairs is, if anything, more rigid than above. At the top is the butler, Mr. Hudson, an even more superior edition of Jeeves. His second-in-command is the cook, Mrs. Bridges, a motherly body with a sharp tongue. We also meet Rose, the parlormaid, who shares both thorniness and sweetness with her namesake;

Emily, scullery maid and hypochondriac; and a Heepish valet given to quoting scripture, among others.

The occasion is the hiring of a new under-parlormaid, a lively bit of business calling herself Clemence Dumas—an unsuitable name for a parlormaid which is forthwith changed to Sarah by Lady M. (When taunted by Rose to justify her name by speaking French, Sarah breaks into a chorus of "Aupres de ma Blonde.") If you watch this episode closely, you will learn all you need to know should you ever decide to go into domestic service.

In the second episode, "I Dies from Love," Sarah's gone and Emily takes center stage. She falls disastrously in love with the footman of a South African "lady"—Mrs. Van Groeben—who is a bit "nohwoo," as one of the gentlemen's gentlemen puts it. Lady Marjorie appears more, and one of the best characterizations is that of Lady Templeton, an elderly upper-class *grande dame* of the old school. She holds no truck with Mrs. Van Groeben, and neither will you by the time it's all over. Still, Mrs. Van G. provides the opportunity for Hudson's one mispronunciation; he just can't get around that un-English dipthong.



You come away thinking that the servants have the most interesting time of it, even with all those grates to clean. If this isn't the way the Victorian age really was, it's probably the way it should have been.

—Louise Kohl

Things We Did Last Summer

Color. 1978. Gilda Radner, Bill Murray, Garrett Morris, Laraine Newman, John Belushi, Dan Aykroyd. 46 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Pacific Arts/Broadway.

There's offbeat. Then there's off-offbeat. And if *Saturday Night Live* was the former, this collection of mini-documentaries featuring the original SNL gang is certainly the latter. Conceived and executed by writer Don ("Guido Sarducci") Novello and filmmaker Gary Weiss, *Things We Did Last Summer's* odd collection of dry humor and moist music should appeal to fans of that era.

Things explores the vacation odyssey of each cast member. Gilda Radner picks up a few bucks by offering the public a pedantic tour of her apartment, asking and getting a dollar a head and hawking dead leaves from her garden at another 50 cents a pop. Meanwhile, "Somewhere in Pennsylvania," Bill Murray is dying to forsake comedy in favor of semi-pro baseball. Trouble is, everyone from the batboy to the outfield can't resist trying out dog-eared jokes on Bill. And *that's* the joke.

In the funniest segment, Garrett Morris decides to reinvestigate an old trade which involves dressing up in jockey's velvets. Laraine Newman has a simply dreadful time in the Caribbean, overwhelmed by fish, paranoia, and more fish. In fact, the only people enjoying an unqualified good time are the brothers of blues, John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd, shown in a straight concert sequence singing the likes of "Hey Bartender" and "Rubber Biscuit."

Things is occasionally fall-on-the-floor funny, sometimes dull, but always good and weird. Novello's writing ages well, and once you've had your first round of laughs you can set about spotting the celebrity cameos. All in all, this is easily the best home movie of 1978.

—John Walker

The Best of Mary Hartman, Volume 1

Color. 1984. Louise Lasser, Greg Mulavey, Dody Goodman, Philip Bruns, others. 60 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Embassy.

Putting soap-opera episodes on videotape seems a bizarre proposition. But then, *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman* was a bizarre soap opera. Conceived by Norman Lear at the height of his reign as TV's king of socially conscious sitcoms, the series was actually supposed to be a parody of the soaps and a satiric take on rampant consumerism, the difficulties of living in Middle America, and other assorted lightweight subjects. Perversely enough, whereas it didn't always succeed in hitting its targets, it *did* work as a soap

opera—making the problems of Mary Hartman (played by Louise Lasser) and her friends and relatives in Fernwood, Ohio a daily viewing necessity for millions.

The three programs on *The Best of...* don't even begin to tell the story as it was developed over two years and countless episodes. Problems of continuity and character development are compounded by the gap between the first episode we see, which also served as the series' debut, and the third, originally run in the show's second season. But of course it's likely that only those who were hooked on the show during its initial run or its brief syndication in 1982 will be interested in this tape anyway. For those fans these three episodes will do just fine since they include such classic bits as Fernwood High basketball

In the first Karen's a virginal teacher drugged by a smug male student, evidently photographed nude, and blackmailed into performing sordid but unseen vices at his whim. Feminists might like the ending, but this is just typical TV eye fodder. Number two is an embarrassment on all counts, with Karen inanely made up as two sisters: one repressed, the other a cartoon version of a slut. Both phone the same psychiatrist for a painfully obvious reason.

However the third segment, "Prey," is sublime in true horror-movie tradition: fun, freaky, and far-fetched. We're sadistically waiting for Karen to get into real trouble, especially after enduring two poor episodes and incredibly bad acting in a phone monologue. She buys an ugly wooden voodoo doll and—it comes to life. The little monster, fierce as a wire-haired terrier,

(his wife was forever bleating, "Why Cosmo, who are you talking to?") or they'd move dishes or newspapers around (on very wobbly wires) to shock visitors or sitcom villains. There was never the racism or slightly sick humor of Thorne Smith's book or the '30s movies. In the book Marian Kirby gaily sings how her husband "the high-flying low-lying soak...ran me smack into an oak," killing them both; on TV they die quietly in an avalanche. In the film she steals sexy undies and also flirts with Topper; on TV Topper is firmly attached to his prissy, whining wife.

Diehard fans (and that's a pun probably used on the show) will be delighted to see the pilot episode among those chosen for this 90-minute collection. It's the best, with the Kirbys invisibly wrecking a house so that Topper can buy it cheaply from a bewildered real-estate agent. Sadly, no episode has those well-remembered dumb Topper one-liners. Like the time a ghost had a rifle float over to him. As he grabbed it someone asked, "How did you do that?" Topper mumbled impishly, "Oh, nothing really. It's an air rifle." —Ron Smith



coach Leroy Fetterens, drowsy after chugging pills and Jack Daniels for the flu, drowning in a bowl of Mary's chicken soup.

Even for those who missed *Hartman* the first time around or couldn't relate to its off-center perspective, the absurdities of the situations, the characters' reactions, and the liveliness of the acting should prove appealing.

—Wayne King

Trilogy of Terror

Color. 1975. *Karen Black*. 71 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Maljack/MPI.

Can the fantasy and horror of *The Twilight Zone* ever be duplicated? Well, *Night Gallery* suggested it can't. And this pilot for a *Night Gallery* type TV show, released as a TV movie, reiterates: no. And it adds another thesis: it's impossible to make one cross-eyed actress look like five different people. Karen Black—with her hair up and glasses on, or her hair down and eyes akimbo—portrays the leading ladies in three separate horror tales by Richard Matheson (the veteran writer of *Shrinking Man* fame and those Corman/Poe goodies). The first two are like something O. Henry might've written with an ax in his brain: long, predictable stories with annoying "shock" payoffs.

chases the stumbling girl all over the apartment, popping up just when she and the viewer think he's been finished off, squealing kamikaze charges while hissing and babbling like a cross between Herve Villechaize and Donald Duck. Karen's bloodied by the monster's sharp teeth and the twist ending is memorably demented: corny, chilling, provoking a laugh and a shudder. Even the flat, hackish direction picks up on this accidentally entertaining segment.

—Ron Smith

Topper

B&W. 1953. *Leo G. Carroll*. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. U.S.A.

Television's *Topper* was based on the classic screwball-comedy movie of the same name. On this legendary show about an elderly banker happily haunted by ghosts, Anne Jeffreys was sexy without even trying. Leo G. Carroll was whimsical and lovable without trying. But the director and scriptwriter weren't trying, and that slows up these shows considerably.

The humor was always mild to begin with: Cosmo Topper embarrassed by George and Marian Kirby, his "sporty spirits." They'd tease him till he'd scold them

Victory at Sea

Vol. 1: *Design for War*. B&W. 1952. *Nar. Leonard Graves*; dir. N. Clay Adams. 30 min. each. Beta, VHS. \$19.95. Embassy.

Between October 1952 and April 1953 NBC produced 26 episodes of the *Victory at Sea* series. Comprised of documentary footage, the series offers a video history of naval warfare during World War II.

One noteworthy aspect of the program is the soundtrack by Richard Rodgers (as in Rodgers & Hammerstein) and performed by the NBC Symphony Orchestra. Since all 30 minutes of film are silent, the music is a big part of the show. The preview cassette was recorded in Dolby mono, with one channel recorded at a higher level than the other. The music is primarily martial. It can get on your nerves. But the black & white output, despite its shortcomings, does give a VCR a chance to strut its stuff: home decks generally reproduce monochrome with 20 percent higher resolution than color.

The volume viewed covers the successful exploits of the Nazi U-2 boats in 1939-41. The victory at sea in this episode belonged, in the words of the announcer, to the Germans. The voiceover is melodramatic, with such lines as: "For fascism to survive, it must kill," and "It's a pitiful, feeble way of making war—hoping, praying to dodge the enemy." There are lots of others. About one-third of this installment is devoted to the land war. Although the segue back to the naval war is smooth, most of the material seems irrelevant.

It is difficult to characterize this tape in such terms as "good" or "bad." The subject will either appeal to you or not. Aficionados of naval war may want to add it to their collections. —Myron Berger

QUICK TAKES/VIDEO

Airborne

Color. 1984. William F. Buckley. 135 min. Beta, VHS. \$89.95. Avant Communications (36 W. 44th St., rm. 797, New York, N.Y. 10036; 212-759-3051).

Celestial Navigation Simplified

Color. 1984. Buckley. 40 min. Beta, VHS. \$89.95. Avant Communications.

Sailing is an activity composed of long tedious episodes punctuated by short exciting ones, and *Airborne* captures the first portion of this dual essence with unfortunate accuracy. Technical quality, both of the film/video footage and of the assembled tape, is too amateurish for the program to sustain interest as a documentary—Jacques Cousteau it ain't. And the content is too idiosyncratic—primarily Buckley's loosely connected musings on friends, travel, how much he paid for his yacht—to be of interest as a meditation on the art of sailing. But it may be enjoyed by fans of Buckley's prose and persona.

Celestial Navigation Simplified proposes to teach almost instantly the use of a sextant to navigate by the sun, by showing "not why it works, but *how* it works." With many viewings, along with much practice with a sextant and the other navigational devices mentioned, the tape may impart some small knowledge of the complex task of navigation. But if you're planning to use this for anything more taxing than a skateboard trip across a shopping mall, take out some travel insurance and name this reviewer as beneficiary.

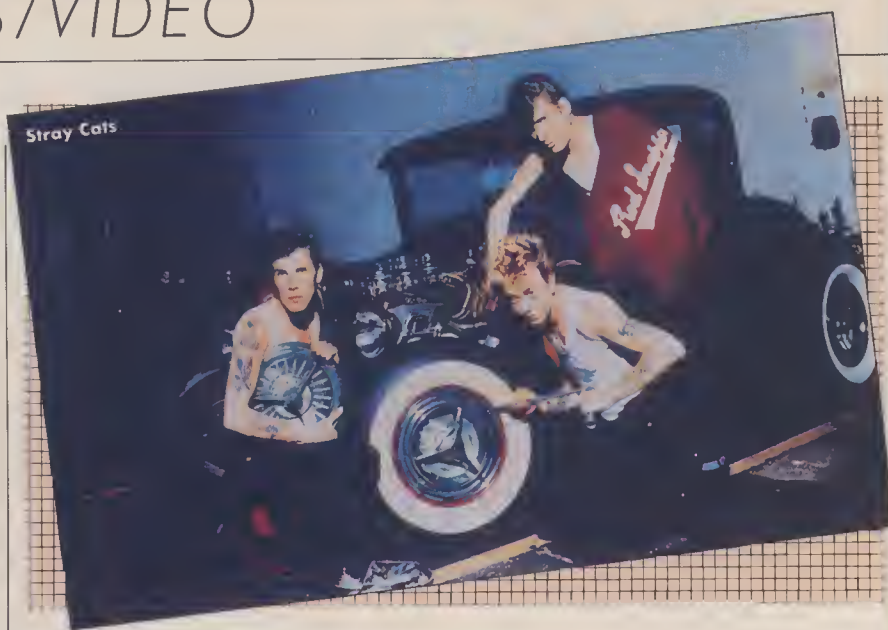
—Richard Jaccoma

Sleepwalker

Color. 1983. Writ./edited Michael Harvey. 48 min. Beta, VHS. \$85. Leviathan Studios (Box 99668, San Francisco, Calif.; 415-931-1378).

It's not often one encounters a videotape that opens with a statement along the lines of: "When we loosen our literal grasp and fall into the twilight between waking and dreaming, our intuitive vision and perception blooms like a cactus flower in the desert night." What follows is the 1980s' equivalent of psychedelic lights—ambient video wallpaper, matching various still and moving images (cars, clowns, street scenes, buildings, seascapes, scarecrows, shop windows) with unrelated sonic effects (chorale, animals, war, machinery). Filmed in England, France, Germany, San Francisco, and the Canary Islands, the pictures are alternately pretty and interesting but will leave the literal-minded with no overall impression—just a lot of moving snapshots and odd sounds. Visual quality and editing are very good; sound is equally clear.

—Ira Robbins



Duran Duran:

Dancing on the Valentine

Color. 1984. 15 min. Beta, VHS. \$16.95. Sony.

Having parlayed their visual assets into worldwide teenpop stardom, Duran Duran continue to mine home video with its third clip compilation. This one, drawing tracks from its newest studio album, offers three directors and approaches. "The Reflex" by Russell Mulcahy is a concert shoot (from a cable special that will soon be a commercial cassette) with clever effects that raise it out of the ordinary. "Union of the Snake" by Simon Milne is a sprawling pseudo-Fellini descent into a surreal netherworld that is equal parts stupidity and pretension. Brian Grant's "New Moon on Monday" presumes to be a mini-movie about the French resistance movement but is too simplistic and self-congratulatory to achieve its pretension—it's just another grandiose Duran Duran dressup vehicle geared to sell records. Back to film school, lads.

—Ira Robbins

Stray Cats

Color. 1984. 13 min. Beta, VHS. \$16.95. Sony.

The recently disbanded Stray Cats were a colorful image-conscious band; their videos, appropriately enough, look like mutated scenes from *Bye Bye Birdie*. The band's believable '50s-style music, combined here with reverent period costumes and sets, take a charming poke at teen rebellion and make for entertaining viewing. These four clips, though done by three directors, make this compilation surprisingly consistent in tone. "(She's) Sexy + 17" and "Stray Cat Strut" look decidedly like Broadway musicals, complete with choreography, broad characters, and exaggerated sets; "Rock This Town" acts out the lyrics in a bowling alley and even includes the nerd who "looks like 1974."

Breaking the mold for a downcast doowop ballad, "I Won't Stand in Your Way" uses shadows and light to convey the number's dark mood rather than its content. Like a living cartoon show, these Stray Cats clips show what can be done visually to entertain—not stun—the audience.

—Ira Robbins

Carlin on Campus

Color. 1984. George Carlin. 59 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Vestron.

"Have you noticed that mice have no shoulders?" Are you interested in smoking breakfast cereal, the invention of the flamethrower, raindance techniques, or how to get into a car? George Carlin is mild and amusing here but he's run out of things to talk about. And for recognition humor based on grossouts, he's down to stomach growls and nausea. There's one classic: his comparison of baseball and football. But the rest is labored, and his ending—a cheerleader's chant made up of dirty words—is self-parody.

—Ron Smith

Dirty Dirty Jokes

Color. 1984. Redd Foxx, others. 60 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Vestron.

Save some money. Buy copies of *Hustler* and have them read to you by deadpan nerds, class clowns, or your local car mechanic who thinks he's funny. A half-dozen "Comedy Store" desperates fire away, most without timing or personality. Some even resort to *Gong Show* props or bad impersonations. The real laugh is in watching the audience: blushing girls, oafs nodding their heads in mock-sophisticated agreement, and folks wincing in shock. 20 percent is funny, 30 wheezes from the Belle Barth era, and 50 is tedious. Redd Foxx hosts but doesn't perform. Uncharacteristically, he smiles a lot. He probably knows these comics aren't competition.

—Ron Smith

DIRECTORY

New Releases on Tape and Disc

At this time of year, TV broadcasters usually shift to reruns. It seems home video is doing the same. Warner has brought back 16 more *Saturday Night Lives*. Added to those previously issued on video, *SNL* becomes one of the largest broadcast series represented in the new medium. Among other TV series you'll find in this month's "Directory" are *Little House on the Prairie*, *Police Squad*, and *Upstairs Downstairs*. And take a look at *TV Rarities Volume 1*.

Woody Allen watchers will be pleased to see *Sleeper* from CBS/Fox and *Manhattan* from MGM/UA. In an attempt to preserve his artistic integrity, the ever-inventive Mr. Allen has insisted that *Manhattan* be issued in the full-width letter-box format (sometimes used to accommodate widescreen opening and closing titles to the 4-by-3 TV screen aspect ratio). Rather than permitting the use of the pan and scan technique—which makes for awkward scenic renditions—Allen wants us to watch *Manhattan*'s underscanned top and bottom picture raster for its entire 95-minute running time. Ironically, the individually

adjustable (and aging) horizontal and vertical scanning circuits found in most TV sets work against Allen's letter-box scheme. If you don't see anything wrong with this *Manhattan*, it means that something is wrong with your TV.

Of special laugh-provoking interest are Vestron's *I Am the Cheese* and *Carlin on Campus*; Peter Sellers in Key Video's *World of Henry Orient* and Pacific Arts' *Down Among the Z Men*; and MGM/UA's *Over the Brooklyn Bridge*. This month's list of really rotten videos includes *Monster from Green Hell*, *Spider Baby*, and *The Robot vs. the Aztec Mummy* from Admit One; *Ape Man*, *Dead Men Walk*, and *Ghost Ship*, all at an irresistible \$9.95 from United Entertainment; and the ever-popular *Night of the Living Dead* from VCI Home Video.

On a more cultural note, don't miss the magnificent Beta/VHS Hi-fi release by Thorn EMI of absolutely first-rate productions of *Aida*, *Die Fledermaus*, and *Messiah*. This month's Video Collector showcases the fine legacy of performances left to us by Sir Richard Burton.

ADVENTURE

Adventures of Captain

Fabian. B&W. 1951. Errol Flynn, Vincent Price. Woman uses blackmail, brings downfall of New Orleans ruling family. 100 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. NTA.

Africa—Texas Style. Color. 1967. Hugh O'Brien, John Mills. East African rancher hires an American cowboy. 109 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. NTA.

Air Force. Color. John Garfield, James Brown, Arthur Kennedy, Gig Young, Harry Carey. The South Pacific in the early days of World War II. 124 min. Beta, VHS (closed captions). \$59.98. Key.

All the Way Boys. Color. 1973. Terence Hill, Bud Spencer. Plane lands in the Amazon jungle. 105 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Embassy.

The Americano. Color. 1955. Glenn Ford, Frank Lovejoy. American cowboy learns from South American ranchero. 85 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. NTA.

Belfast Assassin. Color. 1984. Derek Thompson, Ray Lonnien. Political terror, violence in Northern Ireland. 130 min. Beta, VHS.

The Bounty



\$49.95. Prism.

The Bounty. Color. 1984. Mel Gibson, Anthony Hopkins, Laurence Olivier. Disastrous voyage of the HMS Bounty. 130 min. (PG) LV (stereo). \$29.95. Vestron.

Captain Scarlett. Color. 1953. Richard Greene, Leonora Amar. Nobleman returns from abroad. 75 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. NTA.

Catch Me a Spy. Color. 1971. Kirk Douglas, Marlene Jobert, Trevor Howard, John Fenton. Agent attempts to entrap an inno-

cent man. 94 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Prism.

The Courage of Rin Tin Tin. B&W. James Brown, Lee Aaker, Rin Tin Tin. Boy and dog tame the Wild West. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Monterey.

Daring Game. Color. 1968. Lloyd Bridges, Brock Peters. Man and daughter held captive on an island. 100 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. NTA.

Day of the Animals. Color. 1977. Christopher George, Leslie Nielsen, Lynda Day George, Richard Jaeckel, Michael Ansara, Ruth Roman. Change in earth's ozone layer drives animals to prey on humans. 97 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$19.95 (reissue). Media.

Death Driver. Color. 1970. Stunt driving champion attempts comeback. 93 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Thorn EMI.

Decameron Nights. B&W. 1953. Joan Fontaine, Louis Jourdan, Binnie Barnes, Joan Collins, Marjorie Rhodes. Medieval tales of adventure and romance. 86 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. World.

Fighting Mad. Color. 1981. Jayne Kennedy, Leon Isaac Kennedy, James Iglehart, Carmen Argenziano. One-man war against "the organization." 83 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Continental.

Gold of the Amazon Women. Color. 1979. Bo Svenson, Anita Ekberg, Donald Pleasence. Explorer, old friend set out to find treasure. 94 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Embassy.

Gone Are the Dayes. Color. 1984. Harvey Korman, Susan Anspach, Robert Hogan. The Daye family reluctantly agrees to testify against killers. Beta, VHS. \$69.95. Disney.

Hambane & Hillie. Color. 1984. Lillian Gish, Candy Clark, Timothy Bottoms, O.J. Simpson. Dog and mistress become separated. 97 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$69.95. Thorn EMI.

Kung Fu Kids. Color. Wang Ye Lung, Ou Ti, Chi Chung Lin, Weng Shao Fu, Shih Ting Ken Ma Chang. Abandoned children learn kung-fu. 85 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. TWE.

Last Plane Out. Color. Jan-Michael Vincent, Lloyd Batista, Julie Carmen. Revolutionary drama set in Nicaragua during the Somoza regime. 98 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$59.98. CBS/Fox.

The Last Ride of the Dalton Gang. Color. 1979. Cliff Potts, Randy Quaid, Larry Wilcox, Jack Palance, Dale Robertson, Bo Hopkins, Sharon Farrell, Harris Yulin. Exploits of the Dalton gang. 146 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Warner.

The Little Dragons. Color. Anne Southern, Charles Lane, Joe Spinell. Karate students rescue young family. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$49.95. Active.

The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing. Color. 1973. Burt Reynolds, Sarah Miles, Jack Warden, Lee J. Cobb, Jay Silverheels, George Hamilton. Man regains his children; woman gains her independence. 127 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$59.95. MGM/UA.



Never Cry Wolf. Color. 1983. Charles Martin Smith, Brian Dennehy. Biologist sent to arctic wilderness to study the habits of wolves. 105 min. (PG) LV (stereo). \$34.95. Disney.

One Step to Hell. Color. 1968. Ty Hardin, George Sanders. Government officer tracks convicts through Africa. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. NTA.

Palm Beach. Color. Ken Brown, Mat Young, Bryan Brown, Julie McGregor. A tale of surf, drugs, and rock & roll. 88 min. Beta, VHS. \$49.95. Active.

Return of the Man from U.N.C.L.E. Color. Patrick MacNee, Gayle Hunnicut, Keenan Wynn, Robert Vaughn, David McCallum. Pitted against THRUSH, once again. 96 min. Beta, VHS. \$69.95. TWE.

Sea Devils. Color. 1953. Yvonne De Carlo, Rock Hudson, Maxwell Reed, Denis O'Dea. Smugglers. Beta, VHS. \$19.95. Media.

The Sea Hawk. B&W. 1940. Errol Flynn, Brenda Marshall, Claude Rains, Donald Crisp, Alan Hale, Flora Robson, Henry Daniell. English pirate returns to fight the Spanish Armada. 110 min. LV. \$34.98. CBS/Fox.

Sticks of Death. Color. 1984. Roland Dantes, Rosemarie Gil. Chainsaw-toting gangsters, armed helicopters, a relentless assailant. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$49.95. VCL.

Surabaya Conspiracy. Color. 1973. Barbara Bouchet, Michael Rennie. Treasure discovered by two underworld kingpins. 89 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Monterey.

Ten to Midnight. Color. Charles Bronson, Gene Davis, Lisa Eilbacher. 101 min. (R) LV. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

They're Playing with Fire. Color. 1984. Sybil Danning, Eric Brown. Illicit passion sets off a blaze of murder and madness. 96 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$69.95. Thorn EMI.

The Train Killer. Color. 1983. Michael Sarazin. True story of the demolition of the legendary Orient Express. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$69.95. Vestron.

The Wild Panther. Color. Spies and soldiers in kung-fu combat. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$49.95. World.

COMEDY

Bad Manners. Color. 1984. Martin Mull, Karen Black. Inhabitants of orphanage take blood oath to become family. 85 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Thorn EMI.

Carlin on Campus. Color. 1984. George Carlin at UCLA's Wadsworth Theater; includes "A Place for My Stuff," "Getting Through the Day," "Prayer," "Cars," more. 59 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Vestron.

Carry On, Emmanuelle. Color. 1975. Suzanne Danielle, Kenneth Williams, Kenneth Connor. Lusty woman's foreign diplomat husband is more interested in working out. Beta, VHS. \$37.95. King.

A Christmas Story. Color. 1983. Peter Billingsley, Darren McGavin, Melinda Dillon. Twisted tribute to the original, traditional, one-hundred-percent red-blooded All-American Christmas in Indiana during the 1940s. 95 min. (PG) LV. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

Down Among the Z Men. B&W. 1952. The Goons: Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe, Michael Bentine, Spike Milligan, Carol Carr. Tale of nuclear age involves a top secret formula, absent-minded professor, international crooks, the "Z" reservists. 82 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Pacific.

Finders Keepers. Color. Louis Gossett Jr., Michael O'Keefe, Beverly D'Angelo, David Wayne.



Ed Lauter, Brian Dennehy, Pamela Stephenson. Con man determined to get his hands on loot. 96 min. (R) Beta, VHS (closed captions). \$59.98. Key.

Gallagher—Stuck in the 60s. Color. 1984. Gallagher looks at the things in life which really matter—ugly bathrobes, bad drivers, hog futures, more. Beta, VHS. \$39.95/LV. \$29.95. Paramount.

Gallagher—The Maddest. Color. 1984. Gallagher asks thought-provoking questions such as, "How come Seven-Elevens have locks on the doors when they're open 24 hours?" 58 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95/LV. \$29.95. Paramount.

The Heartbreak Kid. Color. 1972. Cybill Shepherd, Charles Grodin, Eddie Albert. Unhappily married man chases college girl. 106 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$19.95 (reissue). Media.

Highpoint. Color. 1984. Richard Harris, Christopher Plummer, Beverly D'Angelo. Murder mystery involving the CIA, Mafia, a dead playboy, and \$10 million. 91 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$69.95/LV. \$34.95. Embassy.

Joy of Sex. Color. 1984. Colleen Camp, Ernie Hudson, Christopher Lloyd. Wild high school students, an off-the-wall group of teachers. Beta, VHS. \$79.95. Paramount.

Le Magnifique. Color. 1976. Jacqueline Bisset, Jean-Paul Belmondo. Hack novelist's secret agent becomes real-life love object for sociology student. 84 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Prism.

Lave in the Afternoon. B&W. 1957. Gary Cooper, Audrey Hepburn, Maurice Chevalier, John McGiver. Romance of a private detective's daughter in Paris. CED. \$39.98. CBS/Fox.

Mad Mission 3/Our Man from Band Street. Color. 1984. Richard Keil, Tsuneharu Sugiyama. Mission to retrieve two jewels stolen from the English crown. 81 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Thorn EMI.

The Man from Clover Grave. Color. 1974. Rose Marie, Paul

Winchell, Stu Gilliam, Ron Masak. Inventor's toys turn town upside down. 96 min. (G) Beta, VHS. \$19.95 (reissue). Media.

Manhattan. B&W. 1979. Woody Allen, Diane Keaton, Mariel Hemingway, Meryl Streep, Anne Byrne, Michael Murphy. Comedy writer is doing a book about failed marriage. 95 min. (R) Beta, VHS (full-width letter box). \$79.95. MGM/UA.

Mr. Hulot's Holiday. B&W. 1953. Jacques Tati, Nathalie Pascaud. Well-intentioned nitwit stumbles through vacation at a seaside resort. 86 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Embassy.

Over the Brooklyn Bridge. Color. 1983. Elliott Gould, Sid Caesar, Shelley Winters, Margaux Hemingway, Carol Kane, Burt Young. Brooklyn luncheonette owner struggles to buy his dream restaurant in Manhattan. 108 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$79.95. MGM/UA.

Police Squad! Help Wanted. Color. Leslie Nielsen. The first three episodes of the short-lived TV cop show. Beta, VHS. \$39.95/LV. \$29.95. Paramount.

The Prize Fighter. Color. 1979. Tim Conway, Don Knotts. Boxer and manager taken over by gangster. 99 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$19.95 (reissue). Media.

Rascal Dazzle. B&W. 1981. Spanky, Alfalfa, Darla, Pete the Pup, the rest of the Little Rascals gang in some of their funniest situations; narrated by Jerry Lewis. 100 min. LV. \$29.95. Embassy.



The Return of the Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe. Color. 1975. Pierre Richard, Mireille Darc, Jean Rochefort, Jean Carmet. Spies and hired assassins in Rio. 81 min. Beta, VHS. \$49.95. Prism.

Romance with a Double Bass. Color. 1974. John Cleese, Connie Booth. Bass player at princess' wedding skinny-dips in the royal lake. 40 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Pacific.

Saturday Night Live: Buck Henry. Color. 1978. From the NBC-TV series, with Mr. Mike, Franken and Davis. Father Guido Sarducci. 120 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Charles Gartin. Color. 1977. From the NBC-TV series, with Paul Simon, the Persuasions. 67 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Elliott Gould. Color. 1976. From the NBC-TV series, with Leon Redbone, Harlan Collins, Joyce Eversen. 67 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Eric Idle Val. I. Color. 1976. From the NBC-TV series, with Joe Cocker. Stuff. 64 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Eric Idle Val. II. Color. 1979. From the NBC-TV series, with Father Guido Sarducci. 59 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Gary Bussey. Color. 1979. From the NBC-TV series, with Eubie Blake, Gregory Hines. 69 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: George Carlin. Color. 1975. From the NBC-TV series, with Andy Kaufman, Valri Bromfield, Michael O'Donoghue, George Coe, Jim Henson's Muppets. 60 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Lily Tamlin. Color. 1975. From the NBC-TV series, with Howard Shore and his All-Nurse Band, Jim Henson's Muppets. 67 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Madeleine Kahn. Color. 1976. From the NBC-TV series, with Jim Henson's Muppets. 68 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Michael Palin. Color. 1979. From the NBC-TV series, with the Doobie Brothers, Franken and Davis, Father Guido Sarducci. 67 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Peter Cook & Dudley Moore. Color. 1975. From the NBC-TV series, with Neil Sedaka, Jim Henson's Muppets. 67 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Ray Charles. Color. 1977. From the NBC-TV series, with Franklyn Ajaye. 62 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98.

Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Richard Benjamin. Color. 1979. From the NBC-TV series, with Rickie Lee Jones. 64 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Robert Klein. Color. 1979. Episode from the weekly NBC-TV series, with Jim Henson's Muppets. 108 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Rodney Dangerfield. Color. 1980. From the NBC-TV series, with the J. Geils Band, Harry Shearer, Father Guido Sarducci. 68 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Saturday Night Live: Sissy Spacek. Color. 1977. From the NBC-TV series, with Richard Baskin. 68 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.98. Warner.

Sleeper. Color. Woody Allen, Diane Keaton. Deep-frozen fella wakes in the year 2173. 88 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$59.98. CBS/Fox.

Support Your Local Sheriff. Color. 1969. James Garner, Joan Hackett, Walter Brennan, Harry Morgan, Henry Jones, Jack Elam, Bruce Dern. Adventurer becomes sheriff of rowdy town. CED. \$19.98. CBS/Fox.

They Call Me Trinity. Color. 1971. Terence Hill, Bud Spencer, Farley Granger. Saddle tramp finds his outlaw brother masquerading as sheriff. 110 min. (G) Beta, VHS. \$59.95./LV. \$34.95. Embassy.

Top Secret. Color. Val Kilmer. A race to stop the ultimate super weapon from being built. Beta, VHS. \$79.95./LV. (stereo). \$29.95. Paramount.

Trinity Is Still My Name. Color. 1972. Terence Hill, Bud Spencer. Trinity and his brother make good on deathbed promise of their father. 117 min. (G) Beta, VHS. \$59.95./LV. \$34.95. Embassy.

Weekend Pass. Color. 1984. Three sailors have just completed basic training. 92 min. (R) LV. CED. \$29.95. Vestron.

With Six You Get Eggroll. Color. 1968. Doris Day, Brian Keith, Pat Carroll, Barbara Hershey, George Carlin, Alice Ghostley. Widow and widower combine families. CED. \$19.98. CBS/Fox.

The World of Henry Orient. Color. Peter Sellers, Tippy Walker, Merrie Spaeth, Paula Prentiss, Angela Lansbury. Concert pianist gets attentions of two teenage schoolgirls. 106 min. Beta, VHS (closed captions). \$59.98. Key.

You Can't Take It with You. Color. 1984. Colleen Dewhurst, James Coco, Jason Robards at Broadway's Royale Theater. Bizarre past of the eccentric Sycamore family and several lunatic friends. 116 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Vestron.

DRAMA

Against All Odds. Color. 1983. Rachel Ward, Jeff Bridges, James Woods, Alex Karras, Jane Greer, Richard Widmark. Ex-football star hired to track down runaway mistress. 122 min. (R) LV. \$34.95. CED. \$29.95. RCA/Columbia.

Ballad in Blue. B&W. Ray Charles, Tom Bell, Mary Peach, Dawn Addams. Boy must face complicated operation. 88 min. Beta (Hi-Fi stereo). VHS (stereo). \$39.95. U.S.A.

The Best of Upstairs Downstairs Vol. 1. Color. 1971. The Bellamy family, their staff in England during the early part of the 20th century. Produced by London Weekend Television. 50 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Thorn EMI.

The Best of Upstairs Downstairs Vol. 2. Color. 1971. The Bellamy saga continues. Produced by London Weekend Television. 50 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Thorn EMI.

The Best of Upstairs Downstairs Vol. 3. Color. 1971. The Bellamy saga continues. Produced by London Weekend Television.



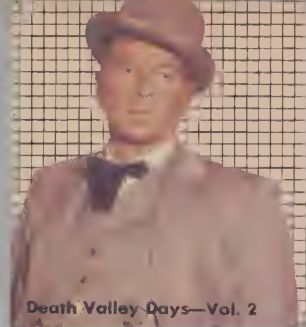
50 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Thorn EMI.

The Best of Upstairs Downstairs Vol. 4. Color. 1971. The Bellamy saga continues. Produced by London Weekend Television. 50 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Thorn EMI.

Beyond Erotico. Color. 1979. David Hemmings, Alida Valli, Andrea Rau. A fallen aristocrat's games of dominance and submission. 90 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Prism.

Bogie: The Last Hero. Color. 1980. Kevin O'Connor, Kathryn Harrold, Ann Wedgeworth, Drew Barrymore. The story of the renowned Hollywood star. 98 min. Beta (Hi-Fi stereo). VHS (stereo). \$49.95. U.S.A.

A Choice of Weapons (also ti-



tled *Trial By Combat*). Color. 1976. John Mills, Donald Pleasence, David Birney, Peter Cushing, Barbara Hershey. The Knights of Avalon have turned into a self-proclaimed vigilante group. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$37.95. King.

Christmas Lilies of the Field. Color. 1979. Billy Dee Williams, Maria Schell, Fay Hauser. A mission's struggle to give a group of orphans a home. 98 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Maljack.

Cold Feet. Color. Griffin Dunne, Marissa Chibas. Urban professionals pursue pleasure. 91 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$59.98. CBS/Fox.

The Cricket. Color. 1983. Anthony Franciosa, Virna Lisi, Renato Salvatori, Clio Goldsmith. A mother/daughter/lover rivalry. 90 min. Beta, VHS (subtitled in English). \$59.95. Embassy.

Death Valley Days—Volume 2. Color, B&W. 1963, 1966. For-

rest Tucker, James Caan, Robert Blake, Jim Davis, Tom Skerritt, Lane Bradford, John Alderson. Episodes from the TV series: "The Kid from Hell's Kitchen" (1966); "Three Minutes to Eternity" (1963); "Deadly Decision" (B&W, 1963). 75 min. Beta (Hi-Fi stereo). VHS (stereo). \$29.95. U.S.A.

Fantasies. Color. 1973. Bo Derek, Peter Hooten. Children raised as brother and sister fall in love. 81 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$59.98. CBS/Fox.

Feel'n' Up. Color. 1976. Search for erotic adventures. 84 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$69.95./Beta, VHS (unedited). Vestron.

Friendly Persuasion. Color. 1956. Gary Cooper, Dorothy McGuire, Marjorie Main, Anthony

Perkins, Robert Middleton. Quaker family struggles during U.S. Civil War. CED. \$39.98. CBS/Fox.

Hans Brinker. Color. 1979. Eleanor Parker, Richard Basehart, Cyril Ritchard. Dutch boy helps his family, wins a pair of silver skates. 103 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Warner.

Harry & San. Color. 1984. Paul Newman, Robby Benson, Ellen Barkin, Joanne Woodward. Loving relationship between aging construction worker, his idealistic son. 117 min. (PG) CED. \$29.95. Vestron.

Helter Skelter. Color. 1976. George DiCenzo, Steve Railsback, Nancy Wolfe, Marilyn Burns, Christina Hart, Cathey Paine, Alan Oppenheimer. Brutal Tate murders by the Manson family. CED. \$19.98. CBS/Fox.

The Highest Honor. Color. 1984. John Howard, Atsuo Nakamura. True WWII story of young Australian officer and Japanese security officer. 99 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$69.95/LV. Embassy.

I Am the Cheese. Color. 1983. Robert Wagner, Hope Lange, Robert MacNaughton. Young man struggles to find his identity. 96 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$69.95. Vestron.

In Search of Anna. Color. Richard Moir, Judy Morris. Released convict tries to pull his life together. 91 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Active.

Invisible Strangler. Color. 1984. Elke Sommer, Stefanie Powers, Robert Foxworth, Sue Lyon. Psychotic killer's trail leaves authorities scrambling for evidence. 85 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$59.95. TWE.

The Joyne Mansfield Story. Color. 1980. Loni Anderson, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Raymond Bukhtencia. Mansfield travels to California to become a Hollywood star. 97 min. Beta (Hi-Fi stereo). VHS (stereo). \$49.95. U.S.A.

Juggernaut. Color. Richard Harris, Omar Sharif, Shirley Knight. Luxury ocean liner about to be blown apart at sea. 113 min. (PG) Beta, VHS (closed captions). \$59.98. Key.

Little House on the Prairie Vol. I: Premiere Episode. Color. 1974. Michael Landon, Karen Grassle, Melissa Gilbert, Melissa Sue Anderson. Family's adventures on the Kansas frontier. 98 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Warner.

Little House on the Prairie Vol. II: The Craftsman/The Collection. Color. 1979/1976. Michael Landon, Karen Grassle, Melissa Gilbert, Melissa Sue Anderson. "Craftsman": young Albert learns about prejudice. "Collection": conman transformed by his priestly disguise; with Johnny Cash. 98 min. Beta, VHS.

\$59.95. Warner.

Little House on the Prairie Vol. III: Remember Me. Color. 1975. Michael Landon, Karen Grassle, Melissa Gilbert, Melissa Sue Anderson, Patricia Neal. Terminally-ill widow seeks home for her children. 97 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Warner.

The Little Princess. Color. 1939. Shirley Temple, Richard Greene, Anita Louise, Cesar Romero, Arthur Treacher, Marcia Mae Jones, Ian Hunter, Miles Mander, Mary Nash, Sybil Jason. Wandering waif finds lost father. 91 min. Beta, VHS. \$19.95 (reissue). Media.

The Loneliest Runner. Color. 1976. Lance Kerwin, Brian Keith, DeAnn Mears, Melissa Sue Anderson, Rafer Johnson. Teen-aged bedwetter becomes Olympic star. 74 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Warner.

Look Back in Anger. B&W. 1959. Richard Burton, Mary Ure, Claire Bloom. University graduate rejects middle class dreams, suffers because of it. 99 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Embassy.

Mrs. R's Daughter. Color. 1979. Cloris Leachman, Season Hubley, Donald Moffat, John McIntire, Stephen Elliott, Ron Rifkin. Mother wages campaign to bring her daughter's rapist to trial. 97 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Warner.

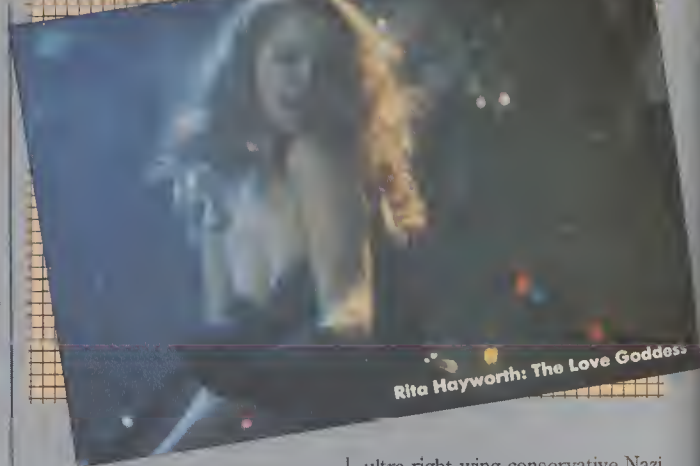
On the Waterfront. B&W. 1954. Marlon Brando, Eva Marie Saint, Lee J. Cobb, Rod Steiger, Karl Malden. Ex-fighter toils for boss on gang-ridden waterfront. 108 min. LV. \$29.95. RCA/Columbia.

Paris Blues. B&W. Paul Newman, Sidney Poitier, Joanne Woodward, Diahann Carroll, Louis Armstrong. Jazz musicians try to make it in Paris. 98 min. Beta, VHS (closed captions). \$59.98. Key.



Reckless. Color. 1984. Aidan Quinn, Daryl Hannah, Kenneth McMillan, Cliff DeYong. Teen-agers race to test the limits of their love. 93 min. (R) LV. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

Red River. B&W. 1948. John Wayne, Joanne Dru, Montgomery



Clift, Walter Brennan, Coleen Gray, John Ireland, Harry Carey Jr., Noah Beery Jr. Son rebels against cattle baron father. 125 min. LV. \$39.98. CBS/Fox.

Rita Hayworth: The Love Goddess. Color. 1983. Lynda Carter, Michael Lerner, Alejandro Rey, John Considine. Hayworth dances, sings, loves, cries her way through fame and fortune. 97 min. Beta (Hi-Fi stereo). VHS (stereo). \$49.95. U.S.A.

The Scalp Merchant. Color. 1975. Cameron Mitchell, Elizabeth Alexander, Margaret Nelson, John Waters. Man returns home, receives hostile reception. Beta, VHS. \$37.95. King.

Seven Daars to Death. B&W. 1944. George Meeker, Michael Raffetto, Chick Chandler, June Clyde. Search for a murderer. Beta, VHS. \$9.95. United.

The Shooting. Color. Jack Nicholson, Will Hutchins, Warren Oates. Bounty hunter turned prospector returns to find things changed. 82 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Continental.

Stay Hungry. Color. Jeff Bridges, Sally Field, Arnold Schwarzenegger. Close-knit families, the strict divisions between upper and lower classes. 102 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$59.98. CBS/Fox.

Terror on the 40th Floor. Color. 1974. John Forsythe, Pippa Scott, Anjanette Comer, Don Meredith, Joseph Campanella. Trapped on the top floor of a burning skyscraper. 98 min. Beta, VHS. \$49.95. Prism.

The Third Man. B&W. 1949. Orson Welles, Joseph Cotten, Alida Valli, Trevor Howard, Wilfrid Hyde-White, Bernard Lee. Writer investigates death of his friend in Vienna. 101 min. Beta, VHS. \$49.95 (reissue). Media.

Tycoon. Color. 1947. John Wayne, Loraine Day, Cedric Hardwicke, Anthony Quinn. Railroad builder encounters obstacles. Beta, VHS. \$28.95. King.

Will: G. Gardon Liddy. Color. 1981. Robert Conrad, Kathy Cannon, Gary Bayer, Peter Ratray. True story of G. Gordon Liddy,

ultra right-wing conservative Nazi admirer and mastermind of the Watergate break-in. 97 min. Beta (Hi-Fi stereo). VHS (stereo). \$49.95. U.S.A.

A Woman in Flames. Color. Gudrun Landgrebe, Mathieu Carriere. Kinky passions, pleasures. 106 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Continental.

FANTASY and SCI-FI

Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp. Color. Animated. Young boy discovers the secret powers of a magical lamp. 65 min. Beta, VHS. \$19.95 (reissue). Media.

Around the World in Eighty Days. Color. Animated. Phileas Fogg sets out to circle the globe in 80 days. 80 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Active.

The Barkleys. Color. Animated. The Barkley canine family in "The Match Breaker," "Finders Weepers." 44 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. TWE.

A Christmas Carol. Color. Animated. Scrooge encounters the spirits of Christmas past, present, and future. 72 min. CED (stereo). \$29.95. Vestron.

Deathstalker. Color. 1983. Barbi Benton. Warrior sets off to win the throne of the evil wizard, the love of a high-spirited princess. 80 min. (R) LV. \$29.95. Vestron.

Doctor Snuggles. Color. 1984. Animated. Kindly inventor finds adventure all over the universe. 60 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Embassy.

Dreamscape. Color. 1983. Dennis Quaid, Max von Sydow, Kate Capshaw. Young psychic enters and participates in other people's dreams. 99 min. (PG-13) Beta, VHS. \$79.95. Thorn EMI.

Hansel and Gretel. Color. 1954. Animated puppets, with the voices of Constance Brigham, Anna Russell, Mildred Dunnock, Frank Rogier, Delbert Anderson,

Melen Boatwright, Apollo Boys Choir. 82 min. Beta, VHS. \$19.95 (reissue). Media.

The Ice Pirates. Color. 1984. Robert Ulrich, Mary Crosby. Entire galaxy's water supply controlled by the evil Templar Empire. 93 min. (PG) LV. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

It's a Wonderful Life. B&W. 1947. James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, Thomas Mitchell, Beulah Bondi, Henry Travers, Ward Bond, Gloria Grahame, H. B. Warner. Angel shows man considering suicide how his life has benefitted family and friends. 125 min. Beta, VHS. \$19.95 (reissue). Media.

The Juggler of Notre Dame. Color. Carl Carlsson, Patrick Collins, Melinda Dillon, Merlin Olsen, Gene Roche, Joel Fluellan. Wandering street juggler, hero-worshipping hobo. Beta, VHS. Buena.

The Jungle Book. Color. 1942. Sabu, Joseph Calleia, Rosemary de Camp. Boy raised by jungle beasts learns about man. 109 min. Beta, VHS. \$19.95 (reissue). Media.

Metropolis. B&W. 1926. Brigitte Helm, Alfred Abel, Gustav Froelich, Rudolf Klein-Rogge, Fritz Rasp. Upper-class man in futuristic city joins worker struggle. By Fritz Lang. 139 min. Beta, VHS. \$79.95. JEF.

Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol. Color. 1962. Animated. Magoo, as Ebenezer Scrooge, receives visits from three Christmas ghosts. 52 min. (G) Beta, VHS. \$19.95 (reissue). Paramount.

The New 3 Stooges Volume IV. Color. 1965. Animated. The Three Stooges in "Movie Scars," "A Bull for Andamo," "The Three Nuts," "The Tinhorn Dude." 30 min. Beta, VHS. \$24.95. Embassy.

The Night Before Christmas/Silent Night. Color. Animated. St. Nicholas in the "Night Before Christmas"; how "Silent Night" was written. 57 min. Beta, VHS. \$19.95 (reissue). Media.

The Premiere Adventures of SuperTed. Color. 1984. Animated. SuperTed and Spottymen in "SuperTed and the Stolen Rocket Ship," "SuperTed and the Inca Treasure," "SuperTed and the Elephants' Graveyard," "SuperTed and the Train Robbers," "SuperTed and the Giant Kites," "SuperTed and the Pearl Fishers." Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Disney.

Raggedy Ann & Andy. Color. 1979. Animated. Raggedy Ann & Andy in "The Pumpkin Who Couldn't Smile," "The Great Santa Claus Caper." 52 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Maljack.

Spectreman in Terror in New Town. Color. 1984. Animated. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. King.

Spectreman in the Monster

from the Deep. Color. 1984. Animated. Spectreman versus the Flying Whale. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. King.

Time Machine. Color. 1960. Rod Taylor, Alan Young, Yvette Mimieux, Sebastian Cabot, Tom Helmore, Whit Bissell, Doris Lloyd. 103 min. LV. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

Timerider. Color. 1983. Belinda Bauer, Peter Coyote, Fred Ward, L.Q. Jones, Ed Lauter, Richard Masur, Tracey Walter. 94 min. LV. \$29.98. Pacific.

Tom and Jerry Vol. II. Color. 1982. Animated. Eight cartoons. 58 min. LV. \$34.95. MGM/UA.

hire insane Egyptian to cater a twenty-first birthday party. 70 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Comet.

City of the Walking Dead. Color. Mel Ferrer. Radiation from a nuclear accident turns plane full of passengers into blood-crazed zombies. 90 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Continental.

The Dark. Color. 1979. William Devane, Cathy Lee Crosby, Richard Jaeckel, Keenan Wynn, Vivian Blaine. Supernatural mangle stalks streets of Los Angeles. 92 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$19.95 (reissue). Media.

Dead Man Walk. B&W. 1944. George Zucco, Mary Carlisle.



HORROR

Amityville 3D. Color. 1983. Tony Roberts, Tess Harper, Robert Joy, Candy Clark, John Beal, Leona Dana. Strange forces from the basement. 95 min. LV (stereo). \$34.95. Vestron.

Angels' Wild Women. Color. Ross Hagen, Kent Taylor, Regina Carrol. Lady bikers rescue comrades from ritualistic sacrifice. 86 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Super.

Ape Man. B&W. 1943. Bela Lugosi, Louise Currie, Henry Hall. Man must have human spinal fluid to become normal. 60 min. Beta, VHS. \$9.95. United.

The Attic. Color. 1980. Carrie Snodgrass, Ray Milland. Ruined dreams, the horrifying reality of the present. 92 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Monterey.

Blood Feast. Color. 1963. Connie Mason, Jerome Eden. Parents

Dead man returns to haunt the man who murdered him. 65 min. Beta, VHS. \$9.95. United.

The Devil's Wedding Night. Color. 1973. Mark Damon, Rosalba Neri, Sara Bay. Archaeologist discovers ring which belonged to Count Dracula. 85 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$49.95. VCI.

Dracula vs. Frankenstein. Color. J. Carroll Naish, Lon Chaney, Regina Carrol, Russ Tamblyn. Struggle to possess the vital serum drained from the decapitated bodies of innocent women. 91 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Super.

Gang War. Color. Pamela Tiffin, Vittorio De Sica, Jean Claude Brailly. Man becomes a violent and ruthless killer when mob threatens his wife. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Super.

Ghost Ship. B&W. 1953. Dermot Walsh, Hazel Court. Ghost terrorizes yacht. 69 min. Beta, VHS. \$9.95. United.

Ghosts that Still Walk. Color. 1977. Ann Nelson, Matt Boston.

ESP and parapsychology expert try to save the life of a young boy. 92 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$49.95. VCI.

Initiation. Color. 1984. Vera Miles, Clu Gulager, James Read, Daphne Zuniga. Sorority ceremony turns into hell night. 97 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$69.95. Thorn EMI.

Madhouse Mansion. Color. Marianne Faithfull, Leigh Lawson. Journey into the world of dreams and supernatural horror. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Comet.

Monster from Green Hell. B&W. 1957. Jim Davis. Journey through Africa with some really big bees. 74 min. Beta, VHS. Admit.

Night Creature. Color. 1979. Donald Pleasence, Nancy Kwan. Writer and adventurer are determined to kill man-eating leopard. 83 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$49.95. VCI.

Night of the Living Dead. B&W. 1968. Judith O'Dea, Duane Jones, Marilyn Eastman. The dead come back to life, march upon humanity. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$19.95. VCI.

The Robot vs. the Aztec Mummy. B&W. 1959. Low budget horror from Mexico. 72 min. Beta, VHS. Admit.

Ruby. Color. 1977. Piper Laurie, Stuart Whitman. Ruby's past spurs terror. 85 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$49.95. VCI.

Screams of a Winter Night. Color. 1979. Matt Borel, Gil Glas-cow, Mary Agen Cox. Young couples tell ghost stories, unaware of the terror that awaits them. 92 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$49.95. VCI.

Spider Baby. B&W. 1964. Lon Chaney Jr., Mantan Moreland, Sig Haig, Carol Ohmart. A cannibalistic clan. 86 min. Beta, VHS. Admit.

Syndicate Sadists. Color. Joseph Cotton, Thomas Milian, Maria Fiore, Evelyn Stewart. Terrorists kidnap and torture their victims. 93 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Super.

Twilight People. Color. 1975. John Ashley, Pat Woodell, Jan Merlin, Pam Grier. Mad doctor creates human monsters. 84 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. \$49.95. VCI.

Twisted Brain. Color. 1973. Pat Cardi, John Niland, Mean Joe Greene. Unnatural biological experiment creates a manbeast. 85 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$59.95. VCI.

2000 Maniacs. Color. Connie Mason. Southern town massacred by Union troops during the Civil War magically reappear—and they're mad. 75 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Comet.

Violent Blood Bath. Color. Fernando Rey, Marisa Mell, Julia Navarro. Judge becomes fascinated by cases involving hideous crimes. 91 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Super.

INFORMATION

America in Space: The 1st 25 Years. Color. Includes the Explorer, Mercury flights, seven astronauts, Surveyor missions, Gemini space walks, Apollo moon landings, Space Shuttle flights, more. 50 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. 2nd.

The Art of Sushi. 1984. Master chef Shige Hara shows step-by-step preparation of sushi and sashimi including tekka maki (tuna roll), sweet omelet, others. Beta, VHS. \$59.95 + \$3.50 s&h. Homespun.

Attack and Reprisal. Color, B&W. 1946. Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the atomic devastation of Hiroshima. 55 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Majack.

The Eruption of Mt. St. Helens Valcans. Color. 30 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. 2nd.

Famous Generals. Color, B&W. 1964. Narrated by Ronald Reagan. The public and private lives of General George S. Patton, General Dwight D. Eisenhower. 60 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Majack.

The Great Chase. B&W. 1963. Buster Keaton, Douglas Fairbanks Sr., William S. Hart, Lillian Gish, Pearl White, Richard Barthelmess, Noah Berry, Mabel Norman, Mack Sennet. Medley of classic movie chases. 79 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Embassy.

Impraper Conduct. 1984. 25 years of Cuban rule by Fidel Castro. Documentary clips, interviews with Castro, footage shot by French and Cuban TV. Beta, VHS. \$79.95. New.

The Lauvre. Color. 1978. Charles Boyer narrates a tour of the Louvre Museum in France. 53 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.98. Warner.

Mt. Rushmore: Four Faces on a Mountain. Color. The creators of Mt. Rushmore overcome almost insurmountable problems to carve a monument. 30 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. 2nd.

Philip Pearlstein Draws the Artist's Model. Color. Pearlstein

narrates a program describing and demonstrating the drawing of human models. Beta, VHS. \$69.95./LV. \$49.95. Interactive.

Shakespeare: Saul of an Age. Color. 1962. Michael Redgrave, Ralph Richardson, other actors perform excerpts of Shakespeare works; visits to sites of his dramatic works in England, Scotland, Wales, France. 51 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.98. Warner.

Sunspat Vacations for Winter. Color. 1984. Tips on accommodations, food, language, currency, attractions, recreation, rates, more at tropical vacation locations. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Videotakes.

You Can Do It. Color. 1984. Shari Lewis, Charley Horse, Lamb Chop, Hush Puppy. How to use card tricks, ventriloquism, origami to mystify friends. Beta, VHS. MGM/UA.

MISC.

Playboy Video Magazine—Volume 6. Color. 1984. Video Playmate Tricia Lange, women boxers, detectives, body-builders, interviews with G. Gordon Liddy and Dr. Timothy Leary. 67 min. Beta, VHS (Hi-Fi, closed captions). \$59.98./LV (stereo). \$29.98. CBS/Fox.

T.V. Rarities Vol. 1. B&W. 1950s-60s. Classic TV episodes from "The Name's the Same" ('50s), "The Jo Stafford Show" (1955), "Dick Sinclair's Polka Parade" (1954), "Stump the Stars" (early '60s), "You Asked for It" (Bela Lugosi performs his famous Vampire Bat trick). 136 min. Beta, VHS. Admit.

MUSIC

ABC Mantrap. Color. 1983. A concept music video. 55 min. LV (stereo, CX). \$24.95. Pioneer.

Aida. Color. 1983. Maria Chiara, Nicola Martinucci, Fiorenza Cossetto, Giuseppe Scandola. Tensions arise from Radames' love for Aida, a slave who is the daughter of an Ethiopian Chieftain. The opera by Giuseppe Verdi, performed at Rome's Arena di Verona. 150 min. Beta, VHS (Hi-Fi). \$39.95. Thorn EMI.

Alaha fram Hawaii. Color. 1984. Elvis Presley in a 1973 live TV concert sings 26 songs including "C.C. Rider," "My Way," "Blue Suede Shoes," "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry," "Suspicious Minds," "I Can't Help Falling in Love with You," "Blue Hawaii." Beta, VHS. Music.

Art Ensemble of Chicago: Live from the Jazz Showcase. 1984. The Art Ensemble of Chicago quintet uses drums, bells, gongs, saxophones, other instruments to perform be-bop, New Orleans jazz, funk, other styles at Chicago's Jazz Showcase. 50 min. Beta, VHS. \$49.95. Research.

Beat Street. Color. 1984. New York City Breakers, Grandmaster

Count Basie Live at the Hollywood Palladium. Color. 1984. Count Basie, his 17-piece big band play "Get It," "Still Swinging," "The Spirit Is Willing," "Splanky," "Leroy Brown," "Shiny Stockings," "Big Stuff." 42 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. VCL.

David Bowie. Color. 1983. Concert in the Serious Moonlight tour, songs: "Let's Dance," "Fashion," "China Girl," others. LV (stereo). \$24.95. Pioneer.

Die Fledermaus. Color. Kiri Te Kanawa, Hildegard Heichele, Dennis O'Neill, Hermann Prey. The glittering party given by Prince Orlofsky. Composed by Johann Strauss, performed at the Royal Opera Covent Garden. 180 min. Beta, VHS (Hi-Fi). \$49.95. Thorn EMI.

The Dirt Band Tonight. Color. The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band in a 1981 Denver Rainbow Music Hall concert, includes "Mr. Bojangles," "Rocky Top," "Will the Circle Be Unbroken," "Make a Little Magic." Beta, VHS. \$29.95 (reissue).



sue). Thorn EMI.

Do They Know It's Christmas. Color. 1984. An original song performed by Band Aid, behind-the-scenes look at stars, interviews, comments, messages from Paul McCartney and David Bowie. From a special Nov. 25, 1984 London recording session with over 40 rock music performers including Boy George, Sting, Bananarama, Phil Collins, Spandau Ballet, Duran Duran, members of Kool and the Gang, the Boomtown Rats. 30 min. Beta, VHS (Hi-Fi). \$9.95. Vestron.

Fallaw the Rainbaw. Color. 1974. Memory Jane, Joe Stewardson, Joan Bickhill. Girl runs away from boarding school in search of her father. Beta, VHS. \$37.95. King.

Freddie Hubbard Studio-Live. Live studio recording session, includes "Hubbard's Cupboard," "Ride Like the Wind," "This Is It," "Birdland," "Bridgette," "Condition Alpha," others. 59 min. Beta (Hi-Fi stereo). VHS (stereo). \$29.95.

Melle Mel, the Furious Five, Afrika Bambaataa, the Soul Sonic Force + Shango. The hip-hop culture of New York's streets. 106 min. (PG) CED (stereo). \$34.95. Vestron.

Billy Squire—Live in the Dark. Color. A 1981 performance at the Santa Monica Theater. Beta, VHS. \$29.95 (reissue). Thorn EMI.

Body Music. Color. 1984. Photographer Brian Aris' still shots of six nude models set to the background of Chris Rainbow's "Looking at You," "Red Light," "Girls in Collision," "Can't Let Go," "Body Music," "Sheree." 30 min. Beta (Hi-Fi stereo). VHS (stereo). \$19.95. Sony.

Breakin'. Color. 1984. Adolfo "Shabba-Doo" Quinones, Michael "Boogloo Shrimp" Chambers, Lucinda Dickey. Street dancers Ozone and Turbo team up with a newfound friend. 87 min. (PG) LV (stereo). \$29.95. MGM/UA.





Sony.

Heartland Reggae. Color. Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, a dozen other Reggae stars in concert. 90 min. Beta, VHS (rechanneled stereo). \$29.95. Continental.

In Our Hands. Color. 1982. James Taylor, Carly Simon, Holly Near, Peter, Paul & Mary, Rita Marley, Pete Seeger, Meryl Streep, Ellen Burstyn, Roy Scheider, Kathryn Walker, John Shea, Orson Welles, others. 1982 Central Park peace demonstration in New York City. 90 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Continental.

Kaal Street. Color. Videos by Kool and the Gang, Earth, Wind & Fire, Ray Parker Jr., Rick James, Midnight Star, Shalamar, the Whispers, Stephanie Mills, Lakeside. 60 min. Beta, VHS (stereo). \$29.95. Continental.

The Mel Torme Special. 1983. Mel Torme Sings "New York State of Mind," "Born to Be Blue," "Blues in the Night," "Oh! Lady Be Good," "When Sunny Gets Blue," "Down for Double," others. 53 min. Beta (Hi-Fi stereo). VHS (stereo). \$29.95. Sony.

Men at Work Live in San Francisco or Was It Berkeley? Color. 1983. Men at Work in a 1983 concert intercut with concept video-clips, with 13 songs including "Overkill," "Dr. Heckle & Mr. Jive," "Underground," "The Longest Night," "High Wire," "It's a Mistake," "Mr. Entertainer," "Be Good Johnny." 58 min. Beta, VHS (Hi-Fi). \$29.98. CBS/Fox.

Messiah. Color. 1984. Judith Nelson, Emma Kirkby, Carolyn Watkinson. The best loved of all oratorios, traditionally performed by less than 40 instrumentalists and a chorus of boy tenors and men. Composed by George Frederick Handel, performed at Westminster Abbey. 145 min. Beta, VHS (Hi-Fi). \$39.95. Thorn EMI.

Mrs. Brawn, You've Got a Lovely Daughter. Color. 1968. Herman's Hermits and the sound, fashion, high spirits of the '60s. 95 min. (G) Beta, VHS. \$59.95. MGM/UA.

The Night They Raided Minsky's. Color. Jason Robards, Britt Ekland, Elliott Gould, Joseph Wiseman, Bert Lahr. A financially-ailing burlesque theater. 100 min.

(PG) Beta, VHS (closed captions). \$59.98. Key.

On the Tawn. Color. 1949. Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra, Vera-Ellen, Betty Garrett, Ann Miller, Jules Munshin, Alice Pearce. 98 min. LV. \$35.95. MGM/UA.

Reckless. Color. 1984. Bryan Adams performs "Summer of '69,"

"Somebody," "Heaven," "Kids Wanna Rock," "Run to You." 30 min. Beta, VHS (Hi-Fi). A&M.

San Francisco Blues Festival. 1983. Led by Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown and Clifton Chenier, performances include "S.F. Bay Blues," "Louisiana Two Step," "What I Say," "Calinda," "Tell Me Mama," "Forty Days & Forty Nights," "Hoochie Coochie Man," "Bloody Tears," "Drifting Blues," "Look on Yonder Wall," "Cold, Cold Feeling," "Frosty," "Too Many Cooks," "Let's Have a Natural Ball," "Sometimes I Slip," "Six Levels Below Plant Life." 60 min. Beta (Hi-Fi stereo). VHS (stereo). \$29.95. Sony.

The '68 Comeback Special (also titled *The Singer Special*). Color. 1984. Elvis Presley does a 1968 TV special after 8 years of making movies, includes "If I Can Dream," "Heartbreak Hotel," "Hound Dog," "All Shook Up,"

"Love Me Tender," "That's Alright Little Mama," "Jailhouse Rock," others. 76 min. Beta. VHS. \$29.95. Music.

Tina Turner Live. Color. 1982 concert includes "Proud Mary," others. Beta, VHS. \$29.95 (reissue). Thorn EMI.

The Threepenny Opera. B&W. 1931. Lotte Lenya, Rudolph Forster. Musical fantasy of crime and sex in the Soho underworld of the 1890s. 113 min. Beta, VHS (subtitled in English). \$59.95. Embassy.

SPORTS

Battling Beauties. Color. Hollywood starlets compete in wrestling and boxing. 60 min. (mature) Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Active.

RICHARD BURTON COLLECTOR

Becket. Color. 1964. Richard Burton, Peter O'Toole, John Gielgud, Donald Wolfit, Martita Hunt, Pamela Brown, Felix Aylmer. The King of England names Thomas Becket as the Archbishop of Canterbury. 148 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. MPI.

Bluebeard. Color. 1972. Raquel Welch, Verna Lisi, Sybil Danning, Joey Heatherton, Richard Burton, Nathalie Delon, Marilu Tolo. Austrian aristocrat kills the women in his life. 128 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$59.95. U.S.A.

Breakthrough. Color. 1978. Richard Burton, Robert Mitchum, Rod Steiger, Curt Jurgens, Michael Parks, Helmut Griem. Plot to assassinate Hitler. 96 min. Beta, VHS. \$49.95. Worldvision.

Brief Encounter. Color. 1974. Richard Burton, Sophia Loren. Two people find love and guilt outside their marriage. 76 min. Beta, VHS. CBS/Fox.

Circle of Two. Color. 1980. Richard Burton, Tatum O'Neal. A May to September romance. 90 min. (PG) Beta, VHS. Vestron.

Cleopatra. Color. 1963. Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Rex Harrison, Roddy McDowall, Pamela Brown, Martin Landau, Michael Hordern, Kenneth Haigh, Andrew Keir, Hume Cronyn, Carroll O'Connor. At the death of Caesar, Cleopatra turns to Mark Antony. 184 min. Beta, VHS (stereo). \$79.98./CED (stereo). \$34.98. CBS/Fox.

Exorcist II: The Heretic. Color. 1977. Richard Burton, Linda Blair, Louise Fletcher, Kitty Winn, James Earl Jones, Ned Beatty. Attempts to rid girl of the devil. 118 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Warner.

The Longest Day. B&W. 1962. John Wayne, Robert Mitchum, Henry Fonda, Andrew Marton, Bernhard Wicki, Rod Steiger,



Robert Ryan, Peter Lawford, Red Buttons, Mel Ferrer, Richard Burton, Irina Demick. 179 min. (G) Beta, VHS. \$79.95. CBS/Fox./CED. \$34.98. RCA.

Look Back in Anger. B&W. 1959. Richard Burton, Mary Ure, Claire Bloom. A university graduate rejects middle class dreams and suffers angrily because of it. 99 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Embassy./Beta, VHS. \$59.95. Warner.

The Medusa Touch. Color. 1975. Richard Burton, Lee Remick, Lino Ventura, Harry Andrews, Derek Jacobi, Marie-Christine Barrault. Man wills events to happen. 110 min. Beta, VHS. CBS/Fox.

The Night of the Iguano. B&W. 1964. Richard Burton, Deborah Kerr, Ava Gardner, Sue Lyon, Skip Ward, Grayson Hall, Cyril Delevanti. 117 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95. MGM/UA.

The Robe. Color. 1953. Richard Burton, Jean Simmons, Victor Mature, Michael Rennie, Richard Boone, Dawn Addams, Dean Jagger. Roman officer is put in charge of executing Christ. 133 min. Beta, VHS. \$79.98. CBS/Fox.

The Taming of the Shrew. Color. 1967. Elizabeth Taylor,



Richard Burton, Michael York, Vernon Dobtcheff, Michael Hordern, Natasha Pyne, Cyril Cusack, Victor Spinetti. Opportunist Petruchio woos and weds the man-hating Katherine. 122 min. Beta, VHS. \$59.95./LV. \$29.95. RCA/Columbia./CED. \$19.98. RCA.

The Tempest. Color. A Hallmark Hall of Fame TV broadcast starring Maurice Evans, Richard Burton, Roddy McDowall, Tom Poston,

Liam Redmond, Lee Remick. 76 min. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Commtron.

Volcano. Color. 1976. Portrait of Malcolm Lowry, author of "Under the Volcano," explores battle with alcohol and guilt. Narrated by Donald Brittain with Richard Burton as Lowry. Beta (Hi-Fi). VHS. \$59.95. RCA/Columbia.

Who's Afraid of Virginia

Woolf? B&W. 1966. Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor, George Segal, Sandy Dennis. An embittered marriage. 127 min. Beta, VHS. \$60. Warner.

The Wild Geese. Color. 1978. Richard Burton, Roger Moore, Richard Harris, Hardy Kruger, Stewart Granger. Mercenaries rescue leader of African nation. 132 min. (R) Beta, VHS. \$59.98. CBS/Fox.

SOURCES

A&M Video, 1416 N. La Brea Ave., Hollywood, Cal. 90028 (213-469-2411).

Active Home Video, 211 S. Beverly Dr. #100 Beverly Hills, Cal. 90212 (213-274-8233).

Admit One Video Presentations, 311 Adelaide St. E., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5A 1N2 (416-863-9316).

Bueno Vista Home Video, 500 S. Buena Vista St., Burbank, Cal. 91521 (818-840-1859).

CBS/Fox Video, 1211 Sixth Ave., 2nd floor, New York, N.Y. 10036 (212-819-3200).

Comet Video, 2320 Cotner, Los Angeles, Cal. 90064 (213-477-8055, 800-821-3427).

Commtron, 1501 50th St., W. Des Moines, Iowa 50265 (515-224-1784).

Continental Home Video, 2320 Cotner, Los Angeles, Cal. 90064 (213-477-8055).

Walt **Disney Home Video**, 500 S. Buena Vista St., Burbank, Cal. 91521 (818-840-1859).

Embossy Home Entertainment, 1901 Ave. of the Stars, Los Angeles, Cal. 90067 (213-553-3600).

Homespun Video, Box 694, Woodstock, N.Y. 12498 (914-246-2550).

Interactive Media Corporation, 72 Video

65 W. 55th St., New York, N.Y. 10019 (212-245-8409).

Jef Films, 143 Hickory Hill Circle, Osterville, Mass. 02655 (617-428-7198).

Key Video, 1298 Prospect Ave., La Jolla, Cal. 92037 (619-459-0500).

King of Video, 2480 Industrial Rd., Las Vegas, Nev. 89102 (800-634-6143).

Maljack Productions, 15825 Rob Roy Dr., Oak Forest, Ill. 60452 (312-687-7881).

Medio Home Entertainment, 5730 Buckingham Parkway, Culver City, Cal. 90230 (800-421-4509, 213-216-7900).

MGM/UA Home Video, 1350 Sixth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019 (212-408-0600).

Monterey Home Video, 7920 Alabama Ave., Canoga Park, Cal. 91304 (800-423-7455).

MPI Home Video, Maljack Productions, 15825 Rob Roy Dr., Oak Forest, Ill. 60452 (312-687-7881).

Music Medio, c/o Medio Home Entertainment, 5730 Buckingham Parkway, Culver City, Cal. 90230 (800-421-4509, 213-216-7900).

New Video, 90 University Pl., New York, N.Y. 10003 (212-243-0400).

NTA Home Entertainment, 12636 Beatrice St., Box 66930, Los Angeles, Cal. 90066 (213-306-4040).

Pacific Arts Video Records, Box 22770, Carmel, Cal. 93922 (408-624-4704).

Poromount Home Video, 5451 Marathon St., Hollywood, Cal. 90038 (213-468-5000).

Pioneer Artists, c/o Pioneer Video, 200 W. Grand Ave., Montvale, N.J. 07645 (201-573-1122).

Prism Entertainment, 1875 Century Park E. #1010, Los Angeles, Cal. 90067 (213-277-3270).

RCA Video Discs, 1133 Sixth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10036 (212-930-4700).

RCA/Columbia Pictures Home Video, 2901 W. Alameda Ave., Burbank, Cal. 91505 (818-954-4950).

Instructional Research Lab, Univ. of Illinois, Box 4348, Chicago, Ill. 60680 (telephone n.a.).

2nd Play Video, 2340 Sawtelle Blvd., W. Los Angeles, Cal. 90025 (213-452-9006).

Sony Video Software, 9 W. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10019 (800-847-4164, 800-522-5229 in N.Y.).

Super Video, 2020 Broadway, Santa Monica, Cal. 90404 (213-453-0521).

Thorn EMI Home Video, 1370

Sixth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019 (212-977-8990).

Trans World Entertainment, 6430 Sunset Blvd. #501, Hollywood, Cal. 90028 (213-461-0467, 800-521-0467).

U.S.A. Home Video, 7920 Alabama Ave., Canoga Park, Cal. 91304 (800-423-7455).

United Entertainment, 6535 E. Skelly Dr., Tulsa, Okla. 74145 (800-331-4077, 918-622-6460).

VCI/Video Communications Home Video, 6555 E. Skelly Dr., Tulsa, Okla. 74145 (918-622-6460).

VCL Communications, c/o Media Home Entertainment, 116 N. Robertson Blvd. #909, Los Angeles, Cal. 90048 (213-855-1611).

Vestron Video, 1011 High Ridge Rd., Box 4000, Stamford, Conn. 06907 (203-968-0000).

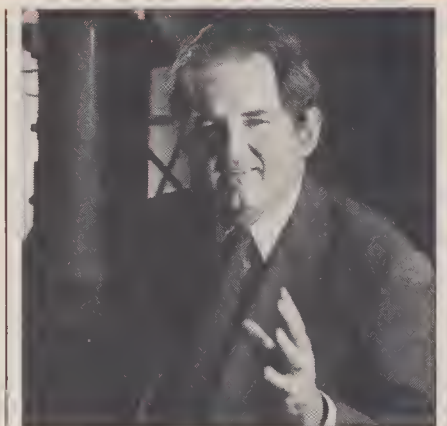
Videotakes, 220 Shrewsbury Ave., Red Bank, N.J. 07701 (201-747-2444).

Worner Home Video, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, Cal. 91522 (818-954-6000).

World Video Pictures, 12401 Wilshire Blvd. #102, Los Angeles, Cal. 90025 (213-820-6100).

Worldvision Home Video, 660 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021 (212-832-3838).





The Future of Home Entertainment.

The marriage of audio and video.

by John Geheran

Vice President, Sales and Marketing



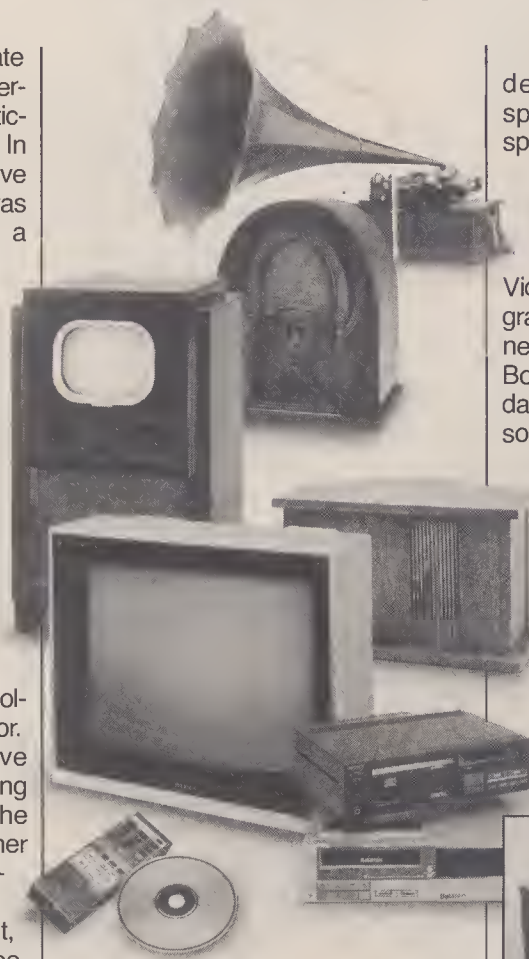
In the 1930s, the state of the art in home entertainment was a static-filled radio program. In the 1950s it was a live television show. In the 1970s, it was high-fidelity music played through a component stereo system.

Now it's 1984. The state of the art is a combined audio/video system. As you've seen during the past few years, the growth of video has provided an enormous increase in the number of choices available to you. You've probably asked yourself: "Do I want VHS or Beta?" or "Should I watch my favorite program now, or videotape it while I watch the playoffs?" But maybe you really should ask: "How can I keep pace with the state of the art in home entertainment?"

Here's a hint: Go turn down the volume on the nearest TV set or monitor.

While advances in video have brought new programs into your living room, it's audio that pulls them off the screen and brings them to life. Whether you're watching a classic rock concert, or the latest movie, audio creates the mood, generates excitement, and sets the pace for what you see. That's why leading manufacturers of video equipment are investing so much time and money developing stereo TV and hi-fi VCRs.

So sound, more than ever before, will determine the overall quality of your




video system. And speakers, more than any other component in your system, determine the quality of the sound you hear. Therefore, the right speakers represent the logical base upon which to expand and upgrade your home entertainment system.

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CHARACTER BUILDING

The ons and offs of title generators

Sports broadcasts wouldn't be the same without the text. It makes the program more exciting to flash things on the screen like the score, the time remaining, the player's names and statistics, and the team's standing in the league. Researching, creating, storing, and retrieving these pages of text is a full-time job for someone on the TV production team.

Many of the same effects are available to the home videophile with character generators, built into cameras or available as inexpensive accessories. (Add-on units only work with specific cameras.) The most simple models give you the option of placing the date and time in the upper left-hand corner of the frame or the time only in the lower right. A battery keeps the time running when the camera is turned off, so the next time you use it, all you do is flip a switch.

Moving up the scale, some cameras let you add your own text. The first ones on

the market were programmed like a digital watch. Using one is like making labels with a Dymo label machine. You keep pressing the button, advancing through the alphabet a letter at a time until you get to the one you want; then you press another button to enter it. This type of character generator is usually limited to a few lines of script, with no variation in size or color. Titles move on and off the screen at the touch of a button.

The latest offerings use a miniature alphanumeric keyboard. You type in the message, which is considerably faster and easier than rotating through the alphabet. There are an increasing number of advanced features. At a recent trade show I saw Panasonic's new PK-958. It had a fold-away alphanumeric keyboard, eight pages of text storage, five sizes and four colors of type, simple graphics, a date/

clock/stopwatch, and a four-page instruction booklet.

At the Creation

The flexibility built into this character generator gives you a lot to think about and decisions to make, but operation is not hard. Pushing a single button puts you in the Create mode. Superimposed on-screen is a grid of small periods, each representing a potential character. Using the typewriter-like keyboard, you move the blinking cursor to where you want to start the text and type it in. If the letters are too small, another button selects larger type sizes (but then fewer characters and lines fit on the screen). After composing your message, another button selects white, red, blue, or green color for the type.

If you don't like what you have done you can clear the screen and start again. If it looks OK, a touch of yet another button

By John Bishop

Renate Stromer

stores that page in memory and you are ready to set up the next page. When tapping, the push of a button superimposes the screen of text over the picture; touch again and it goes away. The next touch brings up page 2. Another group of buttons sets the time and date, and controls the stopwatch function. At first glance this is an intimidating array of controls, but the operations are logical and uncomplicated. It takes about 15 minutes of experimenting to get the hang of loading titles.

What is going on electronically is another matter. Letters are put into a video image by adding voltage at appropriate instants. Video is a constant stream of varying voltages. Every 1/69th of a second a precipitous dip in that voltage signifies the

start (upper lefthand corner) of a new frame. As the electron beam sweeps across and down the screen for the next 1/60th of a second, variations in the signal voltage correspond to the brightness and color of the point of the image at that instant. Any point on the screen can be defined as so many microseconds from the last vertical-sync pulse.

Mr. Chips

The character generator is a computer chip that synchronizes with the video and calculates where in relation to that vertical-sync pulse it has to kick in a spike of extra voltage to burn in the parts of a letter where you want them on the screen. To work properly, a character generator

needs a rock-steady sync signal such as that provided by the camera. The sync signal from a videotape is too variable to drive the character generator; consequently you can't add titles when dubbing from one VCR to another. With consumer equipment, titles can only be superimposed during shooting.

So, what can you do with this marvel of micro-electronics? You can put a title at the beginning of your tape. Titles give a tape a dash of elan. They signify to the audience that this is no casual tape. If the title alone isn't descriptive, a second page of text with a few lines indicating where and when the tape was made adds a lot of crucial information in an elegant and unobtrusive fashion.

To do this without a character generator

SELECTED CAMERAS WITH CHARACTER GENERATORS

Camera Brand/ Model	Suggested Retail Price	Number of Characters	Number of Colors ¹	Number of Character Sizes	Number of Characters Times Number of Lines	Memory Capacity	Stopwatch Total Time & Increments (Hour (') and Minute/ Second/One-Tenth Second ("))	Other Features ²
CANON VC-200A	\$1100	41	1	1	12	volatile	59:59.9"	
VC-20A	\$1395	42	3	4	12 × 5, all sizes	1 year/ 16 pages	59:59.9"	Red, green & white
VC-30A	\$1395	See Panasonic PK-975						
CURTIS MATHES KC768	\$1299	See Panasonic PK-975						
GENERAL ELECTRIC 1CVC5036E	NA	See Panasonic PK-975						
HITACHI VK-C870	\$1025	56	1	2	20 × 8; 10 × 4	1 year/ 1 page	99:59.99"	
VK-C3400	\$1995	42	1	1	12 × 5	none/ 1 page	yes	
JVC GX-N80	\$1249	46	4	1	12 × 5	7-hour/- 8-page	yes	Movable display
MAGNAVOX VR8282BK	\$1199	See JVC GX-N80						
MINOLTA K-800S AF	\$1330	See Hitachi VK-C870						
OLYMPUS VX-304	\$1350	See Panasonic PK-975						
PANASONIC PK-975	\$1300	54	4	4	20 × 9; 10 × 9; 10 × 4; 7 × 3	1-year/ 8-page	9'59:59.9"	Reverse imaging; movable display
PK-958	NA	See Panasonic PK-975						
QUASAR VK-744XE	\$1299.95	See Panasonic PK-975						
RCA CC021	\$1295	62	4	1	12 × 5	none/ 1 1/2-page	59:59.9"	25 words built in
CC031	\$1495	See RCA CC021						
SHARP QC-78	\$1050	48	1	1	12 × 4	1-hour/ 1-page	none	
SYLVANIA VCC1325SL	\$1299.95	72	7	4	20 × 8; 10 × 4; 7 × 3; 5 × 2	1-year/ 8-page	yes	Upward scrolling; red, green, blue, cyan, white, yellow, & magenta

¹4-color capability = red, green, blue, and white. ²All character generators on the cameras listed above have date displays.

SELECTED OUTBOARD CHARACTER GENERATORS

Camera Brand/ Model	Suggested Retail Price	Number of Characters	Number of Colors	Number of Character Sizes	Number of Characters Times Number of Lines	Memory Capacity	Stopwatch Total Time & Increments [Hour (":) and Minute/ Second/One-Tenth Second ("])]	Other Features
CANON CT-20A ¹	\$159.95	46	3	4	60 characters/ 1-page up to 16 pages	16 pages	lapse timer	Adds titles in post production
JVC CG-P50	\$100	46	1	1	12 × 5	1-year/ 14-page	yes	Up/down scrolling (12 characters × 37 lines, 4 at a time onscreen); in/out scrolling
CG-C7	\$150	46	1	4	12 × 5	30-page	yes	Movable display; variable-speed scrolling
PANASONIC PKG-900	\$170	72	3	4	12 × 5	16-page	23'59:59"	
NAP V80049	\$199.99	47	1	4	12 × 5, all sizes	1-year/ 30-page	9'59:59.9"	Upward scrolling
ZENITH VAC301	NA	46	1	4	12 × 5	1-year backup with 2 disc batteries	9'59:59"	2 scroll pages; 4 zoom pages; 8 standard title pages

¹Compatible only with Canon's VC-20A camera, see Cameras with Character Generators chart

is a lot of trouble. You have to make up and photograph title cards. Like the captions in silent movies, title cards break up the visual flow and are not tied in with the video imagery. Superimposed titles are easier to compose and are a natural part of the video flow.

Within the body of the tape titles identify locations, people, activities, and the date. Video stores memories, but a lot changes in a few years. It is not always easy to identify who the people were at the Volunteer Fire Department picnic, where it was held, and which year that was when you go back to look at an old tape. Usually the time of day needn't be on a tape continuously, but can be brought up periodically to show the passage of time and how much has elapsed between scenes.

Characterizations

Making effective use of the character generator takes some forethought and planning. Imagine making a tape of a family holiday. Before anyone arrives, you take 15 minutes to load the first pages of text. The first page has the main title; the second page has a few lines about where, when, and what is to take place; and the remaining pages have people's names, one to a page, to superimpose under them when they first appear on the tape.

To open the tape, superimpose the main title and subtitle over a shot of preparations being made in the kitchen. After all, that's where family celebrations really come together. Set up the shot and start the tape

running. After a few seconds, push the button on the camera which puts on the title and your main title should appear on the screen. Touching the same button again will make the title vanish. The picture underneath remains the same.

Of course it is possible for things to go wrong: perhaps "Uncle Harry" came up instead of "EASTER 1985." The character generator coughs up the pages one at a time; you have to be certain that the page you want is the next one in line. Do this by stepping through the pages with the tape in pause. When the page you want is next in line, start recording. Then push the button; the expected text will appear. When Harry arrives and you want his name on the screen, do the same thing. Stop recording, advance to his page, then start recording and bring his name to the screen.

Periodically, you can bring up the time of day. This is good when you resume recording after a break. For example, you tape the guests arriving, tape again at dinner, and once more after dinner; a brief burn-in of the time of day announces the change of scene. If you have more guests than pages of text, or if you want a different set of titles, it is a simple matter to reprogram. Stop recording, go into the create mode, clear out the old titles, type in the new, and you are ready to resume.

The stopwatch function is excellent for athletic videos. Race footage from a high-school track meet can feature the same on-screen elapsed time as the networks. The timer runs for as long as you need; it

works as well for a 6-hour sailboat race as for a 14-second sprint.

In any situation where videotape is being used as data—such as time-motion studies, traffic-flow analysis, or bank security—the time and date are invaluable. I once taped for an animal behaviorist who used video to learn what monkeys did in play fights. The time code burned into the picture was an essential reference for his work. In a home application you might want to estimate how long it will take to build a brick wall. By recording (with the timer on) while you lay a few rows, you can see from the tape how long it takes to put in each brick or row. You can also pinpoint the most time-consuming (and possibly inefficient) parts of your technique.

The character generator can be invaluable for tapes made to document accident scenes for courtroom use or disasters for insurance claims. The titles unequivocally establish points of view, locations, camera positions, and other pertinent data. If you are trying to establish a condition deteriorating over time, such as the potholes in the road or vandalism of an abandoned house, a shot made every week with the date burned in provides graphic evidence. When documenting a group's ongoing activities such as a strike, town meetings about potentially hazardous facilities, or antinuclear actions, having the date, place, and activity superimposed at the beginning of each sequence saves narration when the pieces are edited together.

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GOOD GRIEF! YOU'RE ON TAPE, CHARLIE BROWN



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'It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown'
(far left), a dog and his boy hit the hay:
'childhood passions bump against Freudian
theory and playground angst.'

BY RON SMITH

At age 35, you can be sure Charlie Brown owns a VCR. If he doesn't, that blockhead had better get one, because all his childhood adventures are now on tape. You can relive the fun too: the tragedies, triumphs, and triumphant tragedies.

Charles Schulz, creator of *Peanuts*, remembers when the strip began on October 2, 1950: "I did it for a local newspaper, the St. Paul *Pioneer-Press*. Then I sold it to a syndicate. Only I didn't call it *Peanuts*. I called it *Li'l Folks*—but the syndicate didn't like that. They didn't want to call it *Good Ol' Charlie Brown*, which was the only other name I could think of. So they called it *Peanuts*. I hated the name then, and in fact I never grew to like it."

Readers grew to love it, and by the early '60s the wit and wisdom of Charlie Brown, Lucy, Linus, Snoopy, and the rest could be found in dozens of novelty books, toys, posters, and greeting cards. And on December 9, 1965 TV audiences saw the first of an enduring series of specials, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. Strangely enough, these cartoons are a lot like Charlie Brown and his friends: imperfect gems. They are vulnerable, they try awfully hard, and they are a little homely. But they are warm, cute, and winning.

Kid Talk

Take the voices, a perfect example of something imperfect that works perfectly. Endearingly and oddly, the characters all speak, as though, there were commas, between almost every word. They speak

with odd emphasis, on certain words, *over* others. They also tend to take comic-strip cries seriously, uttering impassioned "arghs" and "ughs."

Visually, *Peanuts* always was a simple strip—perhaps deceptively so. In the '50s especially, there wasn't much action—just roundheaded potbellied kids walking their jokes through four panels: "Let's have a picnic." "I'll bring the cake." "What will you bring Charlie Brown?" "Me!"

In animation there are lively action sequences, but in most quiet sidewalk scenes the cartoons remain two-dimensional. It looks like the animators used Colorforms: when Charlie Brown is knocked down, he comically has the same posture as when standing. His baseball cap seems glued on regardless of the angle. Yet this strangeness gives the cartoons a certain fantasy element, a distinct "world" that viewers can visit but never dwell in. Not unless they're flat and walk around full-front or in profile.

The *Peanuts* world is a place where childhood and adulthood wistfully struggle with each other. We watch as childhood passions like ballplaying and skateboarding bump against Freudian theory and playground *angst*. A summer's day is not always free from ennui. And it's a place where 8-year-olds use 80-year-olds' expressions, like "good grief."

Schulz donates 10 percent of his income to the Church of God, and *Peanuts* has its gentleness and an attitude of doing good. Yet the shows are filled with worry

(Charlie Brown), hostility (Lucy), fetishes (Linus and his blanket), compulsion (Schroeder and his piano), and escapist behavior (even the family dog spends most of his time fantasizing). But that's part of the interest: innocence versus growing up, childhood naivete versus modern anxiety, children trying to become adults, adults missing being children. And along the way there is celebration and wonder. The 62-year-old Schulz is still amazed: "I don't understand how human beings are able to struggle through all of the things that we do, and laugh as much as we do and form the friendships that we do and have the faith in each other that we do and have the love for each other that we have."

The action in most cartoons involves Charlie Brown's attempts to do his best in circumstances fraught with fear, tension, apathy, or boredom: "I do my best, but my best is not that good," he mutters. But the gentle message is simple. Try—the world won't come to an end no matter what happens.

Holidaze

The early TV specials were keyed to holidays: Halloween, Thanksgiving (an Emmy winner), or Easter. *A Charlie Brown Christmas* is the best, mixing humor with a message about the holiday's real importance. Depressed over Christmas commerciality and the loneliness in forced gaiety, Charlie says, "I know nobody likes me—why does there have to be a holiday to emphasize it?" Lucy insists Christmas is "run by a big Eastern syndicate" and commercialism is simply the way it is. Charlie grapples with the spirit of a traditional Christmas (symbolized by a little balding tree) against overwhelming opposition from his gift-crazed pals.



The Peppermint Patty Workout: 'children trying to become adults.'

The show is paired on tape with *You're Not Elected, Charlie Brown*, a mild 1972 tale starring Linus. "I will do away with kindergarten cap and gown graduation!" he cries, running for office. But as always there is a sober core of realism, and Linus must learn to live with the fact that political promises often remain unfulfilled.

The early specials, drawing more from the strips, are the most satisfying, and 1968's *Charlie Brown's All Stars* is a classic—loaded with the everyday drama of schoolyard competition, fear of failure, and the natural humor of kids at play. Charlie's "All-Stars" was one of Schulz's first and most successful running gags. Sadly, its companion is not memorable: 1981's *It's Magic, Charlie Brown*. After some amusing magic tricks Charlie Brown

is somehow made invisible. In live action, as in *Topper*, the gimmick of invisibility plays well against reality. But a cartoon is already unreal—it's too easy to make someone disappear. And *Peanuts*, a down-to-earth strip, loses when it uses cheap sitcom stunts. Of course, at its worst *Peanuts* hardly offends. Kids will smile and adults will be tolerant. "I'm doomed to walk the world as a lost soul," Charlie cries. His sister is sympathetic: "Then can I have your room?"

Paired evenly are *You're the Greatest* (1979) and *Life's a Circus* (1980). In the former Charlie and friends compete in a junior Olympics against a rare *Peanuts* villain, nasty Freddy Fabulous. It's a cute episodic entry with the kids going through

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WHAT'S AVAILABLE

Bon Voyage, Charlie Brown

Color. 1980. Animated. The gang as exchange students in Europe. 76 min. (G) Beta, VHS. \$29.95 (reissue). /LV. \$29.95. Paramount.

A Boy Named Charlie Brown

Color. 1969. Animated. Charlie Brown gets ready for the baseball season. 80 min. Beta, VHS (closed captions). \$39.98. /LV. \$29.98./85 min. CED (Spanish, English dual tracks). \$29.98. CBS/Fox.

A Charlie Brown Christmas/You're Not Elected Charlie Brown

Color. Animated. *Christmas*: Search for the meaning of Christmas. *You're Not Elected*: The race to be student body president. Beta, VHS. \$39.95. Snoopy's.

A Charlie Brown Festival

Color. Animated. Includes "You're in Love, Charlie Brown," "There's No Time for Love, Charlie Brown," "It's Your First Kiss, Charlie Brown," "You're the Greatest, Charlie Brown." CED. \$19.98. RCA.

A Charlie Brown Festival, Volume II

Color. 1981. Animated. Includes "Be My

Valentine, Charlie Brown," "He's Your Dog, Charlie Brown," "It's the Easter Beagle, Charlie Brown," "Life Is a Circus, Charlie Brown." 104 min. CED. \$19.98. RCA.

A Charlie Brown Festival, Volume III

Color. 1966-73. Animated. Includes "It Was a Short Summer, Charlie Brown," "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown," "You're Not Elected, Charlie Brown," "A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving." 104 min. CED. \$19.98. RCA.

A Charlie Brown Festival, Volume IV

Color. Animated. CED. \$19.98. RCA.

It's Magic, Charlie Brown!/Charlie Brown's All Stars

Color. 1981/1966. Animated. 55 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Snoopy's.

It's Your First Kiss, Charlie Brown/Someday You'll Find Her, Charlie Brown

Color. 1977. Animated. 52 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Snoopy's.

Life Is a Circus, Charlie Brown!/You're the Greatest, Charlie Brown!

Color. 1980/1979. 60 min. Beta, VHS. \$29.95. Media.

Race for Your Life, Charlie Brown

Color. 1977. Animated. 76 min. (G) Beta, VHS. \$62.95./LV. Paramount./CED. \$19.98. RCA.

Snoopy, Come Home

Color. 1972. Animated. 80 min. Beta, VHS (closed captions). \$39.98./LV. \$29.98./70 min. CED (Spanish, English dual tracks). \$29.98. CBS/Fox.

Sources

CBS/Fox Video, 1211 Sixth Ave., 2nd floor, New York, N.Y. 10036 (212-819-3200).

Medio Home Entertainment, 5730 Buckingham Parkway, Culver City, Cal. 90230 (800-421-4509; 213-216-7900).

Paramount Home Video, 5451 Marathon St., Hollywood, Cal. 90038 (213-468-5000).

RCA VideoDiscs, 1133 Sixth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10036 (212-930-4700).

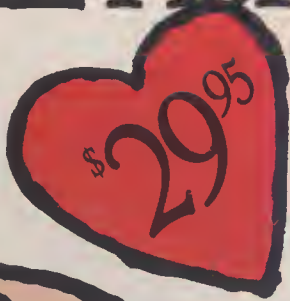
Snoopy's Home Video Library, 5730 Buckingham Parkway, Culver City, Cal. 90230 (800-421-4509; 213-216-7900).

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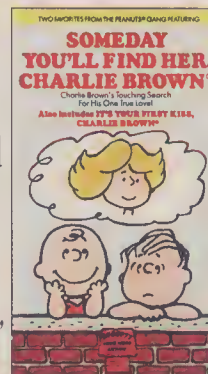
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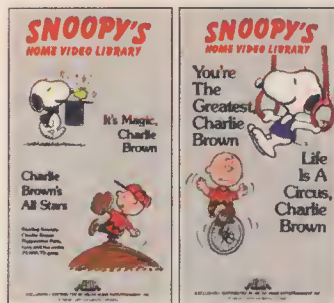


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HOME SHOOTING

MAKE MONEY WITH YOUR CAMERA

BY FRANK LOVECE

Matchbook covers do not ask, "Can you videotape this dog?" But people do—dogs and school plays and golf swings and graduations. Forget weddings and Bar Mitzvahs. The demand for human-scale video services has pushed beyond them to encompass dubbing and editing, how-to tapes, video clipping, even trial depositions. But there are no formal training grounds. So what do you have to do if you've a keen eye, a steady hand, and an unquenchable desire to make a few bucks on the side with your video equipment?

You just do it.

Out-of-home video services are such a new field that anyone with a VCR and a camera can claim to be a videographer, the way anyone with a typewriter can claim to be a writer. No exams have to be passed, and no initials are needed after your name. "No state I know of requires a license for you to go out and shoot video professionally," notes William L. Taylor, chairman of the American Bar Association's Committee on Small Business.

This doesn't mean anyone can become Stanley Kubrick overnight, or that responsibilities are forfeit; a camera, after all, can be as lethal as a gun. Tax laws, copyright laws, and insurance coverage can't be ignored either. Even so, this virgin territory offers not only the promise of a good second or even primary income, but also a chance to indulge your creative urges and to put nothing less than the pow-

er of television in the hands of everyday people—your clients.

Start Me Up

The first step in putting together a home-based video service is to decide what you like to do and what your capabilities are. The documentary nature of shooting weddings and other affairs is just one aspect. Consider, for instance, the painterly nature of a 10-minute "video portrait" of a baby. Imagine how much a parent would enjoy a moving, gurgling alternative to static, conventional baby pictures.

Consider the instructional nature of a tape showing how to unstop a clogged sink or tune up an engine. If you know how to do such things, you also know how often friends call up for advice. Given the cost of a simple oil change, who wouldn't spend 20 bucks on a no-frills no-nonsense tape showing how to do it oneself? If you haven't the patience or knack for a regular how-to, you might hire yourself to tape skiers' snowplows or softball batters' swings, helping them perfect their forms.

You could, in fact, turn just about any hobby or expertise into a profitable video service. Wouldn't fellow nature buffs enjoy a tape devoted to rare flowers or birds? Wouldn't coin collectors appreciate a tape detailing—with all the closeup power of a macro lens—the fine points and flaws of rare coins? You could shoot "video year-books" for high schools, and "video post-

Jose Cruz

Rest Insured

You may be a perfectly nice person, but you may be guilty of equipment abuse. Consumer-gear warranties generally interpret the word "abuse" to include commercial use of the gear, which voids the warranty. If your nights-and-weekends sideline starts to take off, you'd do well to consider buying a service contract. Try to choose a repair shop that'll be around for the length of the contract (no "lifetime" deals), and that stocks spare parts or can get them quickly.

Service contracts aren't the same as insurance, though. Homeowner's or tenant's insurance generally doesn't cover

business-related property damage, and we're speaking not only of damage to your equipment but also to your files and tapes. You'll need a "floater" policy, one that custom-insures particular items against particular perils. Perhaps more importantly, you'll need separate liability insurance—not only to protect yourself if someone trips over a wire you neglected to tape down, but also if, for instance, a video head clogs and you wind up with 90 minutes of nothing.

All this coverage may not be cheap, but it is tax-deductible.

—F.L.

cards" for pen pals (tape pals?). You could tape walking tours to cities, or bicycle tours of country roads. Video depositions have become almost a courtroom staple (although lawyers tend to shoot these themselves). While video wills *per se* aren't considered valid, a taped record of the signing often saves witnesses' having to fly in to testify later on.

Depending on your interests, you could find a niche anywhere from video algebra instruction to video party tapes. "Since I'm a dancer myself," relates Penny Ward, a New York City hobbyist-cum-professional, "I have an eye for dance." Three years ago, while waitressing for a living and just beginning to shoot video for money, she decided to make dance her specialty. Because of her background, she says, "I know what angles will and won't work, and I can anticipate what's coming next. My clients appreciate that I can empathize with them."

You don't have to limit yourself to camera-related services, either: People will pay for dubbing/editing if they want a backup copy of some irreplaceable tape, or if they want to organize their haphazard video collections. Some will want the video equivalent of a newspaper clipping service, for when they or their products are mentioned on the news.

Video clippings, in fact, may be the hot-

test thing going in a world of Andy Warhol's "15 minutes of fame." Suppose you were the parent of an Olympic athlete, for instance. Wouldn't you want someone to tape sports coverage and news items about your son or daughter? Local businesses appear on local news shows; every day people win awards, comment on local issues, and chat on talk shows. Moreover, video clipping services are absolutely legal—although, cautions leading communications attorney James Goodale, "You have to do it 'fairly.' That term in this case means you can only use small bits of a program. You can 'clip' a few two-minute news items, for example, but not a whole half-hour show devoted to your client."

Ol' College Try

Brad Gillum is a college student in Morgantown, West Virginia. Using rented gear, he helps himself through school by shooting "video resumes" and "video portfolios" for art and theater students, as well as for local musicians, magicians, and comedians. "I just tack up flyers," he relates, "trying to put, you know, the idea into people's heads. A lot of people don't think in terms of video, but once they see themselves on tape, they don't know how they ever lived without it."

Gillum's experience in the field is typical of many video-service entrepreneurs. A

video buff, he found he had a knack for shooting in focus and in frame, and so decided to take a short filmmaking course (ironically, through an adult-education program and not his college). "Lighting and editing are different between video and film," he notes, "but things like camera angles and storytelling are the same."

A typical shoot for Gillum began with a phone call. A local comic who'd be performing at the student-union tavern a couple of nights later had seen Gillum's classified ad in the college paper. The ad read: "Professional Videotaping: Performances, Parties, Sports Events. Surprisingly Inexpensive. Industrial-Quality Camera and VCR." Simple and direct.

The comic described what he wanted: an edited 10-minute demo tape of his performance. Since Gillum doesn't have editing facilities, he offered to shoot raw footage of the half-hour act, which the comic could have edited elsewhere. Gillum would need a half-hour to set up, a half-hour to shoot the act, and 15 minutes to shoot closeups for later insertion. He'd rent an industrial camera and VCR for the day for \$50. He already owned microphones, cables, and other bits and pieces, and kept a supply of high-grade tapes (he'd use a T-60 that night). His flat-rate charge to the comic: \$125. Including the time needed to pick up the rented gear, the whole job would

Taxes: Give Yourself a Break

Qualifying for business tax breaks is a major incentive for many videophiles to start their own out-of-home services. Beware, though, that the IRS has its own definitions for "business" and for "hobby."

"As a rule of thumb," notes IRS spokesperson Steve Pyrek, "You have to show a profit in any two of five years you operate your business, or else it's considered a hobby. In that case deductions and business expenses are disallowable."

What kinds of deductions and business expenses are allowed? Among other things, a percentage of your rent or mortgage, and of your utility bills, based on the percentage of space in your home devoted *exclusively* to your business. Within guidelines, you can also deduct the costs of business-related transportation, equipment repair, professional journals, and entertaining clients. You can write off the cost of hiring an assistant; if you hire a consultant rather than an employee, you're not responsible for withholding taxes. Capital expenses—large purchases such as video equipment, a business computer, or office furniture—you can either

write off immediately or amortize over the expected lifetime of the purchase.

You'll file your business tax return separately from your personal tax return, on the "Schedule C" self-employment form. Most likely you'll start out as a "sole proprietor" rather than either a corporation (where backers invest in you, you're paid by the corporation, and the corporation files a corporate tax return) or a partnership (where at least one other individual/corporation/partnership is in business with you, the partnership files, and each partner pays individually).

The IRS supplies free informational booklets which you can either pick up at your local IRS office or send for via the order form included in your 1040. Aside from the general "Your Federal Income Tax" (Publication 17), you might also want to peruse "Self-Employment Tax" (Pub. 533), "Tax Guide for Small Businesses" (Pub. 334), and "Depreciation" (Pub. 534). Since tax laws change every year, make sure you get current editions, which come out every January.

—F.L.

take two hours.

Gillum asked the comic to secure permission from the student union to shoot there, and to make sure there would be a safe, convenient spot for the equipment. Large-scale video services generally take care of such "preproduction" duties, but quasi-professionals may prefer to leave them in the clients' hands. Gillum also suggested the comic put up a sign at the door informing patrons the show would be taped, so that anyone with objections would know up-front; he also asked the comic to get permission to record his monologue directly from the tavern's soundboard. The comic preferred to have audience reaction on the soundtrack, though, so Gillum would mike the stage himself.

"It was a real easy shoot," Gillum recalls. "I checked the equipment that afternoon when I rented it, and checked it again at home with my own mikes. I brought a friend along that night to watch the [two] mikes and stands while I shot. I bought him a pitcher of beer and we both had a good time." Gillum brought photo lights, but turned out not to need them. He turned over the tape to the comic at the end of the night for \$100—in cash, since he won't take checks for his services. "Even if the check bounces," he explains, "I still have to pay for the equipment I rented." Prospective clients approached him all night, he adds, and he made sure to leave lots of business cards around.

Sample Tape

Since word can get around quickly in a college community, Gillum has done well for himself. Others aren't too fortunate at first. "We made a mistake right off the bat," recalls Wayne Ferguson, who co-founded his Video Image Productions in his living-room two years ago. "We put an ad in the classifieds offering to shoot weddings for free, just so we could put together a sample tape to show to people. Not one person called. People thought there must be something wrong, or there was a catch." Later, they took out a second ad with simply "our name, what we did, and our phone number. Someone called, and we got our first job by quoting a price we knew would be the lowest bid."

That brings up a crucial point: how much should you charge for your services? If you work out of your home, your overhead costs are lower than if you had a studio, making you more competitive. But you have to consider several other factors when negotiating a price, such as:

- ☐ How much time is involved?
- ☐ Will the subjects be relatively posed or is there action to follow?
- ☐ How much equipment will have to be carted to the site, and are transportation costs involved?
- ☐ Will additional equipment, such as microphones or lights, have to be rented?
- ☐ Will you have to hire an assistant? Will it

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The Half-Inch Millionaire



Vince Taylor (3rd from r.) directs Pat Paulsen in a Showtime special.

Nineteen-eighty was a bad year for Vince Taylor. Republic Pictures was bottoming out—and so was his job there. Then the doctors discovered his father had incurable cancer. Taylor (32) left Republic and moved to Clearwater on Florida's Gulf coast to be with his parents.

"Taking care of my father was a full-time job. Emotionally, it was totally exhausting," Taylor recalls. "I guess I turned to home video more to keep my hand in and my head together than for anything else. That's what hobbies are for—relaxation. I'd had some film-production experience at Republic. But I never thought I'd make more than loose change out of video."

Taylor got a job as a paramedic at a hospital in Hudson, Florida. After awhile he suggested that the administration produce its own in-house training and patient-education videos. "I guess enthusiasm makes things happen. The administrator OK'd my idea and gave me the honor of producing the tapes—for peanuts."

Taylor used an RCA Vidicon CC010 camera and a Quasar half-inch recorder. He started with staff-training tapes. Then, at a surgeon's request, he began taping operations for instruction purposes too. "I just had simple consumer-quality equipment. But I thought what I had was pretty damn good."

By 1981 he had started his own company, Taylorvision—consisting mainly of some letterhead stationery and a few ads in local papers. "I videotaped anything I could—weddings, dances, bar mitzvahs, you name it." His next purchases were still consumer-grade—an RCA Newvicon CC011, Smith Victor K62 light kit, Panasonic NV8410 portable deck, "and loads of Radio Shack

goodies—I practically lived in that store.

"It's a good thing I didn't know then what I know now. I wasn't aware of the professional world—I was *sure* I had a state-of-the-art setup. So I started contacting local businesses and telling them I'd produce top-grade professional-quality promotion tapes for them. I got lots of rejections. But I got jobs too: from real-estate people taping new developments, from restaurants doing dance contests—strictly local stuff."

Taylor's father died in 1982. But Taylor had good reason not to pick up a film career again—his video career was booming on a small but healthy scale. Taylorvision grossed about \$25,000 in 1982. And twice that in 1983.

The video ideas kept on coming. "I contacted local hotels and offered them a service I called the Welcome Channel. I ran cable to their rooms, and on an unused channel I'd show videos of things available in the Clearwater area—shops, activities, stuff like that. Of course that also meant I could go to the local stores and produce low-rent commercials for them, to show on the Welcome Channel."

Taylorvision changed to In-Focus Productions in late '82. Around the same time Taylor put up his video gear as collateral and got a bank loan for a stripped Econoline van. "I fixed up the inside, and soon I had a complete half-inch mobile video unit. Then I started wasting stationery again—I sent out letters to *everybody* offering my services." An NBC affiliate finally bit and let Taylor work as its area stringer, sending in videotape of local news at the princely rate of \$25 per story. "I bought a police/fire scanner and started chasing accidents. After awhile I noticed that I

continued on page 152

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AMATEUR LENSMEN SHOOT THE NEWS

How to recoup your video investment selling on-the-scene footage

BY LANE VENARDOS

April 27, 1984: Lee and Pat Haldorson are at home in Joliet, Illinois. As the weather turns steadily worse, bulletins on tornado activity in the area hit the radio. There are reports of a sighting not far away, near Plainfield. Lee grabs his RCA recorder and Canon camera and heads for the door to shoot what he can. He gets more than he bargained for: a full-blown twister, its spiral quite visible.

"We took the tape inside and looked at it," Pat Haldorson says later. "And we looked at it again, and we looked at it a third time. Then I said 'Hey, this is really good footage'."

It can be both a dream and a nightmare. Disaster strikes near you—that's the nightmare. The dream is that you have your portable VCR and camera to make pictures. Maybe you are the only one at the scene making pictures of any sort, let alone color videotape with sound. What do you do now?

Perhaps you have seen amateur video footage on a network or local news show. It can be suprisingly professional in content and execution: that twister swooping down, an air-show crash, police activity at the scene of the crime. Lots of

people have VCRs and cameras, and many of them show up at the scenes of news events.

Action!

Swish-pan to the New York headquarters of a television

news operation. A bulletin on the newswires says a man, wanted in connection with a nationwide series of murders involving young women, has killed himself after being surrounded by police in a remote section of New Hampshire near the Canadian border.

It is early afternoon. No affiliated station is nearby. Chances are not good for launching a correspondent, producer, and crew from New York City to this remote region

to return in time for the 6:30 p.m. feed of the *CBS Evening News with Dan Rather*. Maybe we can get them into Boston—a CBS Bureau is located there and transmission facilities exist from Boston to New York. The Lear jet is launched. Now the "dream" sequence starts.

A CBS staffer on the New York assignment desk is on the phone with the police in Colebrook, New Hampshire. The authorities there say "someone" was at the scene of the shooting moments after it happened. That someone had a video camera. The search is on.

Time becomes an increasingly large adversary. Given the remote nature of the New Hampshire location, it will take at least an hour of fast flying in a helicopter, then the Lear jet to get to Boston. Add a 20-minute second helicopter trip from the airport to a downtown helipad near the bureau. Then add the time it will take to feed whatever material we end up with. It boils down to this: if CBS's material doesn't leave Colebrook by about 4 o'clock, it won't make the broadcast at 6:30. Whatever happens, it is going to be tight—but we do tight feeds every evening and, as they say in the late-night TV ads, "trained professionals are ready to serve." Now comes the nightmare.

ABC has either found the cameraman or he found them. The effect is the same either way, from CBS News' standpoint. They are getting the material and we are not. Our crew in the Lear jet probably won't get back in time. Even if

Where are these networks and how do I call them?

*All four networks have bureaus scattered around the nation.
Here is a list of cities and phone numbers:*

Atlanta	ABC 404-434-7000	CBS 213-852-2202
	CBS 404-321-4321	CNN 213-469-5533
	CNN 404-827-1500	NBC 213-840-4133
	NBC 404-881-0154	
Boston		Miami
		ABC 305-448-9036
	CBS 617-720-3425	CBS 305-545-5000
		CNN 305-947-9016
Chicago		NBC 395-868-1501
	ABC 312-750-7777	
	CBS 312-337-1341	New York
	CNN 312-661-1100	ABC 212-887-7777
	NBC 312-861-5400	CBS 212-975-4114
		CNN 212-839-6000
Dallas		NBC 212-664-4444
	ABC 214-641-7777	
	CBS 214-742-4743	San Francisco
	CNN 214-747-1440	CBS 415-362-0051
	NBC 214-988-1300	
Denver		Washington
	CBS 303-720-3425	ABC 202-887-7777
Los Angeles		CBS 202-457-4444
	ABC 213-557-4517	CNN 202-342-7900
		NBC 202-885-4200

Lane Venardos is Executive Producer of the CBS Evening News with Dan Rather.

they could, the scene in Colebrook will be much less dramatic by the time we get there. Well, we sigh, maybe ABC won't get their tape back in time.

It's 6:30 p.m. *They do*. We don't; lots of long faces. We do get some "recent" aftermath, but the crowds, the car, the body: all are gone. "It's not a disaster," I explain to the most competitive anchorman ever. "But it could have been a whole lot better."

There is a bright side to this scenario. We wipe the other network's clocks more often than they wipe ours. But hustle cannot get you what you set out for all the time. Luck plays a big part in cases like the New Hampshire incident, and others.

Luck may have provided the gust of wind that knocked a small Central American airliner a couple of miles off course. It flew over a remote airfield which happened to have most of the Sandinistas' previously unphotographed air force parked on it. Tape of the planes and the field taken by a passenger who didn't really know what he had led to an exclusive report on the *CBS Evening News* by Pentagon correspondent David Martin.

Air Force planes flying in formation crash in the Nevada desert. The pictures taken by a civilian from a mile away are not great, but they're a lot better than no pictures. Tornadoes in the middle west are a terror—and a source of fascination at the same time. One Saturday last April, separate people—each with a video camera—taped twisters in Illinois and Nebraska that gave viewers a chilling sense of the tornadoes bearing down.

So let's say something has happened. You were there to see it and you took videotape of it. It seems like a big deal to you. We are approaching the first test: Is it news?

It doesn't take a lot of deep thinking to realize that network news broadcasts will be interested in coverage of events with large scope or particularly dramatic human impact. Local stations will be interested in such events too, but may also care about the four-car accident with three serious injuries. Judge the size of the story by the size of the television

market. Events with the impact of a Safeway opening may be big news in some places, but you'll get a dial tone in your ear if you offer it to the assignment manager of a large city.

Let's assume that what you are covering is a big deal—not World War III, but good nonetheless. A train wreck. A *passenger-train* wreck. Cars piled up all over one another, probably down in a ditch (these things always seem to be down in some ditch)—and of course not near anywhere in particu-

□ Time's important. The time spent shooting an event should be just enough to provide pictures and sound. A lot of extra shooting can just get in the way. It all depends on the time of day and how far this tape has to go to get on someone's program.

Who to call? The best is the local station you watch every night for the news. If you have a video camera and have taken pictures of a news event, chances are you are a serious news viewer too, and chances

**Air Force planes in formation
crash in the desert. The
pictures taken by a civilian
are not great, but they're
a lot better than no pictures.**

lar. You know that even if you have to go home to get your camera, you'll still be at the scene a long time ahead of anybody driving or helicoptering in from elsewhere. So you get the camera and start shooting. Another test: what and how to shoot.

Down to Business

This isn't a primer on shooting videotape, but shooting a news event is different from your son's eighth birthday party. Here are some hints:

□ Use a new cassette and record at the fastest speed.

□ Let your shots run 20 seconds or so at least. Don't try to "edit in the camera."

□ Always think "high shot" and "wide shot." Give the viewer some perspective on the location. Don't forget faces.

□ Avoid swift pans and zooms. Pan slowly. Zooms should take five seconds from start to finish.

□ Remember sound. Natural sound is an important part of any news event. Don't become part of the background yourself. In short: don't talk while shooting.

□ Do some interviews. Even if you are behind the camera, ask some people what happened. Try to position the interview subject with the scene of the news event behind him or her.

are also good that you watch a station that treats the news seriously. Start there.

The Haldorsons did. They called WBBM-TV in Chicago first. Later, all three network affiliated stations in the Windy City ended up using the twister tape on their newscasts. Pat Haldorson said she had a lot of trouble getting through to the stations' newsrooms, but persisted and finally reached the newsdesk at each station. She thinks she's partly responsible for WBBM-TV's setting up a news hotline number. Many big stations in large markets and some stations in not-so-large markets have such numbers. ("If you see news, call 1-800-CH 2 NEWS" is an example from WCBS-TV in New York City.)

You may not have to make a phone call at all. If TV crews start showing up at the news site after you've taken the good stuff, contact the reporter from the local station. Or perhaps wait and see which station doesn't show up. That station may be an even better possibility for your tape. Desperation for coverage can be an effective lever, especially in a competitive TV market.

If what you've got is great stuff, you won't have to do a hard sell—once you get through. And you won't want to give it away. Even in small television markets, good


coverage of dramatic events may be worth something. How much? Hard to say.

Money isn't everything, however. To have a tape incorporated in a news broadcast seen by thousands locally or millions nationally—and get credit for that tape on the air—is incentive enough for some. Lee and Pat Haldorson were paid \$300 by WBBM-TV, the CBS station in Chicago, for their tornado pictures. The tape was used on the network broadcast as well. But, says Pat: "all we really cared about was getting our name on the tape when it aired. That was special to us." A couple of thousands dollars is routine payment for material used on the network's evening news.

Don't overlook the networks. In most cases, once you have given or sold your tape to a local station, it will then make it available to the network with which it is affiliated, if any. Your deal with the local station can be for *its* use only, and a separate arrangement is made with the network. Arrangements for getting the tape to New York are handled by the network.

It does the TV station or network no good, of course, if it cannot play back your tape. Several thousand person-hours of sweat were expended at CBS News when some pretty good tape of the Grenada invasion made by a local resident on his PAL-SECAM Betacam came into New York with no playback machine nearer than Grenada, Europe, and Japan. You and your machine should be prepared to go somewhere (with all expenses paid for you, naturally) to have the tape transferred to the 3/4-inch U-Matic format most commonly used for broadcast videotape editing.

All of this has to do with being in the right place at the right time. We are a long way from 8mm film cameras as state-of-the-art "home movies." The timeliness of home videotape makes it a real competitor in the same-day news business.

Consider for a moment, if you will, a day in Dallas in November 1963—and how much more might now be known about a tragic act if it had been videotape, not film, in the hands of a man named Zapruder. 

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*Michael Musto and the Must
(clockwise from left):
Bobby Reed, Rhonda Granger,
Jeff Horn, Michael Musto.*



I MADE A Rock VIDEO

A tragicomedy in one act

As anyone in a rock band knows, you can play the best music in the world and still end up gigging for mozzarella crumbs in the basement of some pizzeria. It's not enough just to do good music. You have to have a hook that makes you different, a twist the media and the public can latch onto that'll put you over the top.

More than two years ago I came up with just such a promotional device for my band. Little did I know that every other band in western civilization had simultaneously been struck with the very same brainstorm: I wanted to do a video.

Let me explain that MTV didn't even exist yet as far as I knew, and my only awareness of videos came from the few artists whose clips I'd seen in a handful of New York clubs like Hurrah and the Ritz. Video was a new, exotic movement to me, and I assumed my contribution to it would be a groundbreaking effort that would take its place in the pantheon among ahead-of-their-time works by David Bowie, Lene Lovich, and Spandau Ballet. Who knew video would be jumped on by every single recording star and his (well, Cyndi Lauper's) mother?

Low-Rent Party

Now that my video, "Jimmie Gimme Your Love," is finally available to the public on Sony's *Danspak II* EP, it's swimming in such a sea of big-money competition, I

worry that the only fame that might come my way is as the perpetrator of the cheapest video ever made. But my directors assure me that won't be the case. They once did one for only \$150—half of my extravagant budget. My directors are Merrill Aldighieri and Joe Tripician ("Co-Directions"), the team responsible for offbeat and innovative clips by such non-superstars as Lenny Kaye, Jim Carroll, and Man Parrish. *Rolling Stone's* recent video book named them among the Top 20 video directors along with biggies like Bob Giraldi and Russell Mulcahy. But who's counting?

My group—Michael Musto and the Must—is a neo-Motown dance band fronted by me and backed by five musicians and my own variation on the Supremes, a duo of backup singers I sometimes call Panic in Detroit. (If you heard them sing, you'd know why they're panicking.) Along with Detroit oldies like "Get Ready," "You Can't Hurry Love," and "I'm Living in Shame," we also do an occasional original number with Motown flavor transplanted to a contemporary style. "Jimmie," by recording artist/producer Cindy Bullens, was the one we decided to dramatize. It was our best song and the one with the greatest visual potential.

Merrill and Joe had witnessed our debut performance the previous year—a triumph of dilettantism over the odds (all three singers were writers whose previous experience mostly included a lot of work in the shower). They agreed to shoot the video anyway—not for any great financial gain (the \$300 budget was strictly for expenses), but because it fit in perfectly with the kind of off-the-beaten-track project in which they specialize.

When it came time to storyboard our ideas, it helped that all the clichés to come had yet to be ingrained on our consciousness. We didn't know that every major video had to have a smoke machine, sexy girls in Spandex, and a plot that had nothing to do with the song. We didn't know you had to start out with three minutes of dialogue, then segue to someone stepping out of a Porsche. We just thought you were supposed to do a fun, fast-moving representation of the group's personality. Since personality was one thing we had in abundance, we decided to forgo the smoke machine.

By Michael Musto

Merrill: "I wanted a classic tailored look without being too tight. The whole tape has a clean uncluttered feel to it. Plus I wanted a sense of improvisation in the parts that weren't storyboarded. I believe in beginner's luck. I've gotten my highest praise over things I've tried for the first time. And I enjoy spontaneity, especially with people who aren't used to acting." I was used to acting, but certainly not with a camera pointing at my face. And I had no doubt that everything I did was going to look spontaneous, since I had no idea what the hell I was doing.

The song—a saga of obsessive unrequited love—could have gone in a million visual directions. "Jimmie" could have been portrayed as a man, a woman, or a hermaphrodite. I could have played Jimmie in drag, but we remembered that Bowie had already done that (and just about every other "new" idea) years ago. Or "Jimmie" could stay off-camera, a figment of the viewer's imagination. Since videos are supposed to have something to do with imagination—they should open up possibilities for interpreting a song, not close them off—we went with that final option. So the video depicts me obsessively running after this unseen object of my affections, strutting down the streets of Times Square, careening across the directors' Riverside Drive rooftop with guns in my hands (an image that was supposed to say, "Give me your love—or your life"), tossing and turning in bed, typing a love letter, zooming through subways, searching, stalking, and just generally looking obsessed.

Permit Me

We'd actually planned to shoot on the ominous steps of the 42nd Street branch of the Public Library and had even secured a permit to do so, but rain forced us underground. We didn't have a permit to shoot there, but when confronted by a cop, we pleaded for him to let us carry on in the name of Art—an argument we were sure would tug at the heartstrings of any New York policeman. Amazingly, he went along with it, but I think it was more because he was interested in pursuing my luscious blond sax player, Rhonda Granger, than in pursuing Art. The guiding rule of unauthorized video shooting quickly became clear: a luscious blond saxophonist is more important than a permit.

Shooting was simple and without snags, except my right eye was suddenly in such excruciating pain that I could hardly open it. That—not a vain attempt to look cool—explains my dark glasses. It also explains why we did that scene in one take. Immediately afterward I was rushed to an eye clinic where I was diagnosed as having major contact-lens trouble. My eye, much like my brain, was suffocating from lack of oxygen.

The next day I had a new gas-permeable lens and a new bracing attitude—"the Must must go on!" At Larry Matthews,

We'd rejected some earlier ideas, like a scene with a woman holding a pig that turns into a baby.

New York's only all-night hair salon, we filmed another scene in which we mimed getting manicured, permed, and blown dry, even though we urgently needed *real* beauty treatments. I thought it would be a cute setting for us to sing about obsessive love—sort of a tongue-in-cheek twist on the girl-group/beach-blanket mentality. I hadn't anticipated that a friend, Beau-regard Houston-Montgomery, would steal the scene, and probably the entire video, as the manicurist. With a porcelain hand cryptically coming out of his head and a droll look on his face, he achieved in a three-second cameo just the kind of impact I was trying for in the whole damned three minutes. Viewers invariably shriek over his performance—always a good sign.

We were starting to be glad we'd rejected some of our earlier ideas, like a scene with a woman holding a pig that turns into a baby. That would have been a nice *homage* to *Alice in Wonderland*, but what did it have to do with "Jimmie"? Besides, where were going to get a pig in New York, or a more to the point, a woman to hold it? And one more thing: I wasn't going to be upstaged by any pig, OK? Other ideas that sounded sensational just didn't pan out, like our choreographed sway in front of the beauty-shop mirror, with ornamental masks on our faces. It would have made no sense, even if we were all swaying the same way. And even beneath the ornamental masks, you could sense our embarrassment. Classic and tailored it wasn't.

Some things that happened out of necessity turned into godsend, like the use of black & white film for the subway sequence. There wasn't much light down there, so we used black & white only because it was more color-sensitive than color film would have been. The grainy effect we got—also a result of the directors' "pushing" the film, i.e. developing it a little longer than usual—was perfectly gorgeous in that grungy Martin Scorsese way I've loved since reveling in the degeneracies of *Taxi Driver*. It made our cheap Lurex outfits glisten like the most radiant slices of street life. In the color scenes, though, they just look cheap.

The beauty parlor scene was done in video, for two reasons: We wanted to shoot a lot of footage, and with video, the more you shoot, the more money you

save. And film is portable—you're not tied by cables to the VTR operator, so it's better for scenes that require movement. Video works well in a controlled situation.

Since a lot of the video involved lip-sync, Merrill and Joe had to shoot a lot of footage just to make sure we were covered from any sync foulups. "Lip-sync is technically more demanding than non-lip-sync," says Merrill, "and it was even more so because we used a different machine during taping than the one we used to transfer the sound. They were slightly off in speed." Though such discrepancies can be—and were—corrected with slick editing, Merrill and Joe found a better solution: they now use one set of equipment from beginning to end. Live and learn (at my expense).

Playtime

Almost everything can be corrected in the editing, and I trusted Merrill and Joe to do just that. My trust was justified. In the editing room, they managed to piece all the incongruous segments into a fairly unified whole that looked as if it was done with some foresight and planning. As it turned out, the video begins with Rhonda wailing on her sax in the street with a sign that says "Help Struggling Musician Get Through Juilliard" (the sign was upside down, a *faux pas* I probably would have caught if my eye hadn't been suffocating). Then I come bounding down the street, the myopic diva, singing my obsession as my panicking Greek chorus—Brant Mewborn and Mary Kaye Schilling—echo every phrase I sing with an obedience that would please Diana Ross herself. In the background you can see the appalled faces of passers-by. No, it's not an oversight; highlighting them was a conscious decision on our part. Not only was it perfect for that spontaneous feeling we wanted; it was cheaper than hiring extras, who would only look like extras anyway.

From there the video carries on, alternating between all the scenes—the street, the rooftop, the wakeup, the typing, the manicure—culminating in the subway, where the appalled faces look even more appalled. Unfortunately, we didn't capture the most dramatic of all: the lady who overheard me say that my father's name is "Ciro Musto" and launched into an enthusiastic monologue about how she loved my father and keeps a photo of him on her mantelpiece to this day. I couldn't imagine how she'd met him, except maybe Wednesday nights at Maple Bowling Lanes in Brooklyn. Then it dawned on me that she thought I'd said "Zero Mostel." Politely, I bade her adieu and crawled under a camera. Though *that* spontaneous moment was lost, we did get a good solid ending when a bag lady threw me a look that mixed curiosity with revulsion. It was the kind of improvisational moment not likely to crop up in something like "Thriller."

Brightening up the video along the way

continued on page 153

MAJOR HOLLYWOOD STUDIO OPENS FILM VAULTS!



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A Dumont radio and television combination (above), circa 1947. The Bendix 'TV, A La Carte' (right) came with a bow-tie antenna and 50 feet of electric cord 'for patio use.'

Antique TVs

The boob tube becomes collectible

It is said that there is a collector for everything, from antique furniture to (believe it or not) pieces of old barbed wire. Just check the pages of the various collectors' journals. So it seems perfectly normal that, in this electronic age, vintage TV sets just could become the next hot collectible.

Old TVs? Those blurry worn-out black & white monsters of the past? Well, remember that one's trash is another's treasure. Some early sets are masterpieces of cabinetry. Others are *kitschy* nightmares. All are reminders of the days when television was a novelty.

Certain unique problems come with collecting old TVs. The first is that many don't work. But

aside from worn-out, blown, or otherwise destroyed picture tubes, most old sets can be repaired. The second dilemma of the TV collector is that TVs take up lots of space, especially old console models. As a result most TV collections—even the relatively largest ones—are small in number. There are only a few

serious TV collectors—that is, collectors who have pursued their hobby for more than a decade and who hunt for the rarest of video trophies. One of these is Dan Gustafson, a Chicago collector who estimates that the elite core of this elite corps numbers about a dozen. There may be thousands of others, however, who own a set or two and are actively in the market for one or two favorites. In California, for example, the interest in old TVs follows the recent surge in popularity of 1950s "Eisenhower Era" furniture—kidney-shaped coffeetables, butterfly chairs, and Calder mobiles. West Coast antique dealers report a brisk business in the blonde-wood mammoths of the same period.

Before & After

Collectible early TVs fall into two general categories: pre-World War II and postwar sets. The first division includes all attempts at television until 1941. This means all-electronic sets that employed a cathode-ray (picture) tube, but also mechanical "flying-spot scanner" sets which used a huge perforated spinning wheel to create a small, crude image. Many collectors of these scarce sets have collected radio equipment from the same period. Postwar sets are "modern" TVs that represent the popularization of television and its eventual growth into a powerful mass medium. The most collectible of these are oddities and one-shots—the atypical instead of the ordinary. The growing number of collectors interested in these sets are usually younger peo-

Photo left courtesy Bettman Archive, hand colored by Christine Rodin; photo right: Wide World

By Tim Onosko



The Philco G-4252 Predicta has a 21-inch screen and a tube that swivels.

ple interested in style rather than history.

Finding all-electronic prewar TVs is difficult for many reasons. Few, of course, were sold. Collector Gustafson estimates that only 5000 of these were sold during the first two years they were available to the public, 1939 and 1940. And since TV programs were only being broadcast in three major cities—New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles—the sets are usually found only in these areas.

While RCA was responsible for most of the prewar sets, other manufacturers such as American Television, Guilfillan (the first California TV maker), Andrea, Dumont, and General Electric also produced TVs during this period. Philco announced its intention to enter the TV market before World War II and in fact produced around 100 TVs, but never actually sold them. Some of RCA's sets, too, were sold by Westinghouse and Sears Roebuck. Of course, all were black & white. Picture-tube sizes were standardized at 5, 9, and 12 inches (measured diagonally). The smaller tube sizes were viewed directly, but the 12-inch tube was so long that it had to be mounted vertically in the cabinet. Those pioneering TV watchers had to view the tube reflected in the set's mirrored lid.

These sets, although electronically similar to modern TVs, were built to tune in only four channels which were assigned different frequencies than are used today. You'll find the "lost" TV Channel 1 on the dial of these sets. Prewar TVs also used AM rather than FM sound, so they must be converted to receive today's broadcast-TV audio. (RCA modified customers' sets to receive FM sound during the 1940s.)

Even then, they can receive only today's Channel 2. Not surprisingly, only about 50 prewar sets are known to exist. Most are in the hands of private collectors, although a few are in museum collections as well.

Even more scarce than the all-electronic sets are the mechanical flying-spot scanners. In these, a metal disk was drilled with holes in a special pattern. When a flickering neon lightbulb was viewed through the spinning disk, a very small (1-1/2 to 2 inches), very low-resolution picture (30 to 60 lines vs. today's 525 lines) could be seen. Only a few of these sets were sold, and again they were confined to New York and Chicago, where experimental broadcasts could be received. (Chicago had the most scanner TV stations, with 4 operating in 1930. It is estimated that 5000 to 8000 scanning sets were sold there.) There is no way to know if a mechanical TV works since none are compatible with present-day broadcasts. The scanner sets were manufactured from 1927 to 1934 by companies like Baird (in both England and the U.S.) and RCA.

These sets are virtually priceless and can command any money that one of the few collectors interested in them can ask of another. All-electronic sets also vary in price, from less than a \$1000 to 10 times that amount if the set is in perfect condition. Most of these go for between \$1500 and \$3500 when they are unearthed. The sets in poor condition cannot be repaired, since none of the original round picture tubes exist and there are no known modern equivalents except for the five-inch models.

It should also be pointed out that while we refer to prewar sets as "TVs," that abbreviation was never used for television during the 1930s. Legend has it that Earl "Madman" Muntz, a California used-car salesman turned television manufacturer, actually coined the term in the late 1940s. For the record, Muntz also named his daughter "Teevee," perhaps to cement his reputation as a zany promoter.

Into the TV Era

No sets were manufactured between

1941 and 1946, as wartime priorities turned the radio and electronics industries to instruments for the war effort, particularly the development of radar. After World War II, RCA again led the market, producing its model 630—the TV considered to be one that introduced the medium to the masses—for three years. It sold for about \$400 in a genuine walnut cabinet. Bought by millions, it is a common postwar collectible.

Projection TVs appeared around 1947 from several manufacturers: RCA, Norelco, GE, and Emerson. These were big cabinets which projected images from behind a translucent screen. Unwieldy gargantuans and dim by today's standards, they vanished by 1950. A few of these appear on the collector's market from time to time though most are not eagerly sought.

Most sets from the 1950s are difficult to tell apart except to the serious collector. The early half of the decade was dominated by small-screen (usually 14- to 17-inch) consoles. The latter half brought in larger tubes and metal table-top cabinets. A few unusual early sets had round unmasked picture tubes, 21 inches or larger. One set, the Kalmus (sold by the family that founded Technicolor), used a black & white 30-inch tube inside a blonde-wood cabinet so large that it was designed with two planters, one on each side.

Color entered the picture in 1954 with the introduction of RCA's model CT-100, a 15-inch set. Viewed today, this TV dispels all notions that TVs in the 1950s were technically primitive. The pictures viewed on a mint-condition CT-100 today aren't just watchable, they're amazing: clear, moderately bright, and with excellent color rendition. Except for the distinctive round picture tube—masked for a semi-rectangular shape—it is nearly as good as present-day sets, although the colors seem more saturated, something like color movies from the 1930s and '40s. Very few of these sets exist, and they're usually snapped up quickly by collectors for \$1000 or more.

A genuine oddity was produced by Phil-



This Motorola (circa 1950) has a 7-inch screen and tunes 8 channels.



The 14-inch Motorola 14P1 was touted as a 'big screen' portable.

co in 1960: it was a battery-operated portable named the Safari. Reminiscent of today's Sony Watchman sets (though considerably larger), the Safari projected an enlarged (to about five inches) black & white image directly to the viewer using a concave mirror. It was a goofy design that lasted exactly one year on the market. Today, the Safari goes for about \$300 to collectors.

The Safari wasn't the only strange idea to come from Philco. A year earlier, in 1959, the company began producing what is today the most sought-after series of old TV sets, the Predictas. These sets—all of which were black & white—were distinguished by their 21-inch picture tubes. Instead of being hidden inside a square wooden cabinet, the Predicta tube was separate from the rest of the electronics, sheathed in a form-fitting metal and plastic envelope. Two of these daring designs had the tube perched atop the cabinet containing the electronics, tuner, and speaker. One was a table model, the other a freestanding wooden tower. The tubes could tilt and swivel on these bases. The oddest Predicta had the picture tube completely separated (up to 20 feet!) from its controls and innards, connected by a heavy multi-wire umbilical cable. Except for this latter model, Predictas—which were off the market by 1961—still turn up in antique stores and at garage (or estate) sales and flea markets, and usually go for between \$75 and \$500 depending on condition, state of repair, and region of the U.S. where they are being sold. (Prices on the Predicta are low in the midwest, high in California.) At those prices they probably represent a bargain which is almost certain to appreciate in value.

Age of Innocence


All of the collectible TVs are part of an era gone by: the days when television was a new idea which had not yet demonstrated its incredible power. Today, only a few sets are designed for aesthetic value as

well as performance. Only a handful of TVs are produced in the United States. And no black & white sets are made here at all.

That doesn't mean, however, that TV

collectibles ended with the 1960s. In fact, new TV and video gear has steadily entered the collectors' market. The first attempts at home-video recorders, Sony's CV series (also sold by General Electric in the late 1960s), will appreciate in value in the coming years, as will the defunct Cartrivision video machines of the early 1970s. If being extinct is a requirement, add to this list the RCA CED videodisc players. And even though the LV medium is still alive and kicking, the very first Magnavox laser videodisc player is another good bet for the future. So if you have a "first," hold onto it.

The first round of pocket TVs from Sony, Casio, and Panasonic are also likely collectible candidates, as are the newest color liquid-crystal display pocket sets from Seiko and Epson. Any collector will tell you that the first model of anything new—whether TV-related or not—will someday be valuable.

So it turns out that television—often criticized as a "disposable" medium—isn't so disposable as it might seem. The old TVs give us a link to the past in these days of the future. 

Views from the Top



Gustafson, with RCA TRK-12: the collector's collector.

Dan Gustafson, a Chicago advertising executive, is one example of a hardcore TV collector. Gustafson's collection hovers around 100 sets, about 25 of which are displayed in various corners of his home. Like most TV collectors he complains about his lack of exhibit space.

Among his sets are several mechanical-scanning units: an English Baird set, a scanner once owned by Chicago's notorious Al Capone, and the RCA set widely photographed displaying the landmark "Felix the Cat" image first generated by RCA in its laboratories.

Gustafson also owns several pre-war sets, one of which—a reflector-type 12-inch screen—is in near-mint condition and yields excellent pictures and sound. He owns nearly every

noteworthy postwar set, including the RCA CT-100 color set and Philco Predictas mentioned in this story.

Gustafson's pride and joy, however, is unfortunately too big for his home museum. It is a limited-edition RCA projection set from the 1940s. (Gustafson is an admitted RCA freak.) The company built only eight of these, which could be custom-ordered only at its New York headquarters. The cabinet is nine feet wide and seven feet high, constructed in Cuba of solid mahogany. In addition to the big-screen rear-projection black & white TV, it also housed a special high-fidelity AM/FM radio and 78-RPM phonograph. The set sold for \$3800 in 1947 and Gustafson's is the only one known to exist. —T.O.

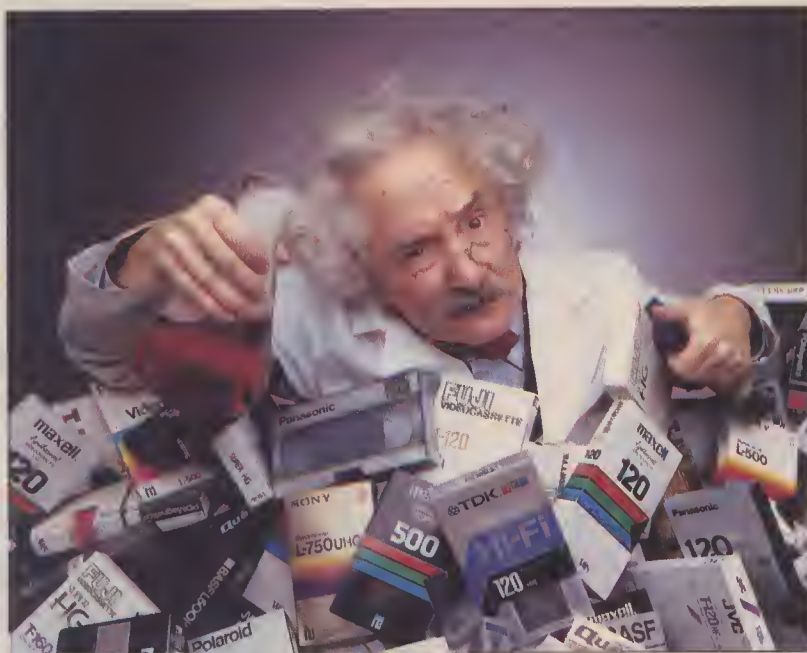
THE OFFICIAL VIDEO MAGAZINE BLANK TAPE TESTS

PART II-BETA

Beta cassettes are smaller than VHS cassettes, but if you pull a length of tape out of the cassette—don't!—the tape inside looks like VHS tape because both are a half-inch wide and about the same thickness. Don't let appearances fool you; they are not the same tape. The demands of the Beta format are different from those of VHS so, although the dimensions and methods of manufacture are similar, the formulation of the critical magnetic oxide layer is almost always different. Every manufacturer of tapes for both formats says so. Hence,

you can get a feel for the quality a specific manufacturer puts into his product from the VHS tests, but you can't predict how his Beta tape will perform based on VHS numbers. Beta tapes must be put through their paces separately.

Almost all the theory of how magnetic tape works is the same for both formats. But how that theory is applied does vary. A single pair of heads lays down the video tracks—the luminance information is recorded by frequency modulation of a carrier, and the chroma information is recorded as amplitude modulation at a lower frequency. However, the carrier frequency for Beta is higher than the one used for VHS. The tracks are laid down with wider heads for Beta, at a different track angle, with a different azimuth angle between the heads,



and a higher speed. So not only can't you interchange the cassettes, but the demands on the tape are different. For good-quality results Beta tape must record at higher frequencies.

Mechanical differences between the formats exist too. In the Beta format the heads are in contact with the drum all the time while the cassette is in the machine. That includes the fast-forward and rewind modes. So though the Beta machines may subject tape to lower tensions at some times, they demand tapes that are less abrasive to provide the same head life. (We've poo-h-pooed the use of rewinders for VHS as a convenience, but for Beta tapes they do make a significant contribution in that they lessen the amount of time that tape touches the head.) No question about it: Beta tapes have to meet different

challenges than VHS.

Equipment Used

For Beta tapes we made the same measurements as for VHS—but on a Beta VCR of course. The measuring equipment was the same, however. We chose Sony's SL-2700 as the test VCR and operated it with the Hi-Fi option turned off. Some manufacturers would have preferred us to use an industrial machine. However, it can be demonstrated that the performance of tape in different machines is a fixed relationship with each machine, and though actual measurements are different, bad doesn't

become good or vice versa. Nor does the ranking of the tapes change. So we think our choice is justified, especially because you'll be using consumer machines at home—not industrial ones. The measuring equipment included a video noisemeter and dropout counter by ASACA/ShibaSoku; signal generators by B&K, Sencore, Technics, and Heathkit; oscilloscopes by Tektronics, Sencore, and Heath; and voltmeters by Hewlett Packard, Beckman, Heath, and others; plus all the other ancillary equipment usually found in an electronics lab.

Test Procedures

We requested samples of different batches from manufacturers and bought or swapped samples from dealers to avoid ringers, as we did with the VHS tests.

Tom Weihs

BY LANCELOT BRAITHWAITE

Then we measured seven characteristics of each that tell you enough about a tape for you to make an informed choice, and calculated one characteristic, "Dispersion," that tells you about the consistency between batches. The characteristics we measured were video (luminance) signal-to-noise ratio (S/N), chroma AM S/N, chroma PM S/N, dropouts, output loss at 3 megahertz (MHz), audio S/N, and audio frequency response. Because only one Beta machine was released in the U.S. with split-track stereo (Marantz VR 200, VIDEO, May 1983), we did not perform a track-balance test. The dispersion figure is a measure of how large the variation was between the video S/N of the best and worst batches of each tape type.

What the Terms Mean

□ **Video S/N** is a measure of the proportion of noise in the video signal. On the screen it gives an effect of graininess or snowiness. It is one of the most annoying deficiencies in a video signal.

□ **Dispersion** is the difference between the best and worst video S/N measured for each type of tape. It is an indication of the variation between batches. We could have calculated dispersion figures for each characteristic, but that would cause more confusion than it would contribute to understanding variation.

□ **Chroma AM S/N** is a measure of how much variation there is in the color intensity of a field of a single color. Variations in color intensity are caused by noise affecting the amplitude of the color signal responsible for intensity.

□ **Chroma PM S/N** is a measure of how much variation there is in the hue or shade of a field of a single color. Variations in hue are caused by noise affecting the phase relationship that determines the hue in a color picture.

□ **Dropout count** is literally a count of portions of the video signal missing from the tape. They are caused by areas on the tape with too few magnetic particles or by

debris on the tape that momentarily separates the tape head from the tape surface—like a wheel going over a rock. We classify them by length of missing information in microseconds. If they are over 15 microseconds, they are large; between 10 and 15 microseconds, medium; and between 5 and 10, small. All VCRs have dropout-compensation circuits that minimize their effect—but when their effect does get through, you see annoying white or black streaks of noise in the picture.

□ **Output loss at 3MHz** is a measure of sharpness. Signals of 3MHz are pretty close to the limit of VCR reproduction. Measuring 3MHz output tells how much the tape contributes to lack of sharpness in the picture.

□ **Audio S/N** measures how much noise affects the audio signal. It is noticeable as hiss. Since all the tapes are tested under the same conditions, any differences in S/N are due to the tape. This principle is what all our comparisons are based on.

□ **Audio Frequency Response** is a measure of what range of frequencies are reproduced by the tape and machine within 3dB of the signal that was recorded.

All these characteristics are discussed in greater length in the VHS tests last month. The reasoning that was used there applies equally well for Beta tapes. However, as we explained earlier, some factors are more important with Beta tapes. Because of our methods of expressing the data, figures in dB, actual counts, and frequency-response numbers are directly comparable so you can make comparisons between the Beta and VHS results. The format differences are masked by the method of presentation and the measurement.

How to Read the Chart

We've managed to squeeze the whole chart into one page, so that makes it more convenient to compare all the tapes—but we had to move Our Rating System from

the same page. However, that doesn't make the chart more difficult to interpret if you remember two things: One is that the bigger the Merit figure, the better a tape performs in that area. The other is that dB with a (+) sign says that an item is better and a (-) sign says it is worse. We've talked about dB scales often enough in the past, so it is not essential here. A complete discussion of how dB figures work appears with the VHS tape tests in the February 1985 issue of VIDEO, which we encourage even Beta users to read.

Keep in mind the significance of what characteristics we measured, and if you think one is more important than another, you can create your own rating system in the extra columns provided. That is quite simple. If you think one characteristic is twice as important as the others, just multiply our merit figures by 2 for the whole column and you have created your own rating system. You can tailor make the chart to suit your needs.

Remember: video signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) tells you how grainy or snowy the picture will be. Dispersion rates the variation of different batches of the same kind of tape. Chroma AM S/N tells of variation in color strength or intensity. Chroma PM S/N tells of variation of shade or hue. Dropout count tells how many large/medium/small dropouts occur in one minute of average tape, but that the count is usually much higher for the first and last few minutes on any cassette. Output loss at 3MHz is a rough indicator of sharpness. Audio S/N tells how much hiss there is (not applicable on the Hi-Fi tracks of Beta Hi-Fi machines). And audio frequency response is an indicator of how wide a range of tones may be recorded with less than 3dB output loss.

Strongly consider comparing tapes that are close to each other yourself, on your machine—because just going by the numbers may lead you to a less-than-ideal tape

*continued on page 154
chart, diagrams begin overleaf*

OUR RATING SYSTEM

Key: E-Excellent, V-Very Good, G-Good, A-Average, F-Fair, W-Weak, P-Poor.

Video S/N		Dispersion		Chroma AM S/N	Chroma PM S/N	Dropout ^a	Audio S/N	Audio Frequency Response		
+1.0	10 E	0.0	10 E	+2.4 - +2.7	10 E	+2.5 & over	10 E	0 - 10 E	53 plus E	57 - 12.5k E
+0.9	9 V	0.1	9 V	+2.0 - +2.4	9 V	+2.0 - +2.4	9 V	11 - 20 V	52.0 - 52.9 V	60 - 12.5k V
+0.8	8 V	0.2	8 G	+1.6 - +1.9	8 G	+1.5 - +1.9	8 G	21 - 30 G	51.0 - 51.9 G	60 - 12.0k G
+0.7	7 G	0.3	7 A	+1.2 - +1.5	7 A	+1.0 - +1.4	7 A	31 - 40 A	50.0 - 50.9 A	60 - 11.5k A
+0.6	6 G	0.4	6 F	+0.8 - +1.1	6 F	+0.5 - +0.9	6 F	41 - 50 F	49.0 - 49.9 F	60 - 11.0k F
+0.5	5 A	0.5	5 W	+0.4 - +0.7	5 W	0.0 - +0.4	5 W	51 - 60 W	48.0 - 48.9 W	60 - 10.5k W
+0.4	4 A	0.6	4 P	0.0 - +0.3	4 P	-0.5 - -0.1	4 P	61 plus P	47.0 - 47.9 P	60 - 10.0k P
+0.3	3 F			-0.3 - -0.1	3 P	-1.0 - -0.6	3 P			
+0.2	2 F			-0.7 - -0.4	2 P	-1.5 - -1.1	2 P			
+0.1	1 W			less		-2.0 - -1.6	1 P			
0.0	0 W			than -0.7	1 P					
less than 0	0 P									

^aThis merit figure scale is based on the number of 15-microsecond dropouts on the sample measured, i.e., the first of the numbers in the column above.

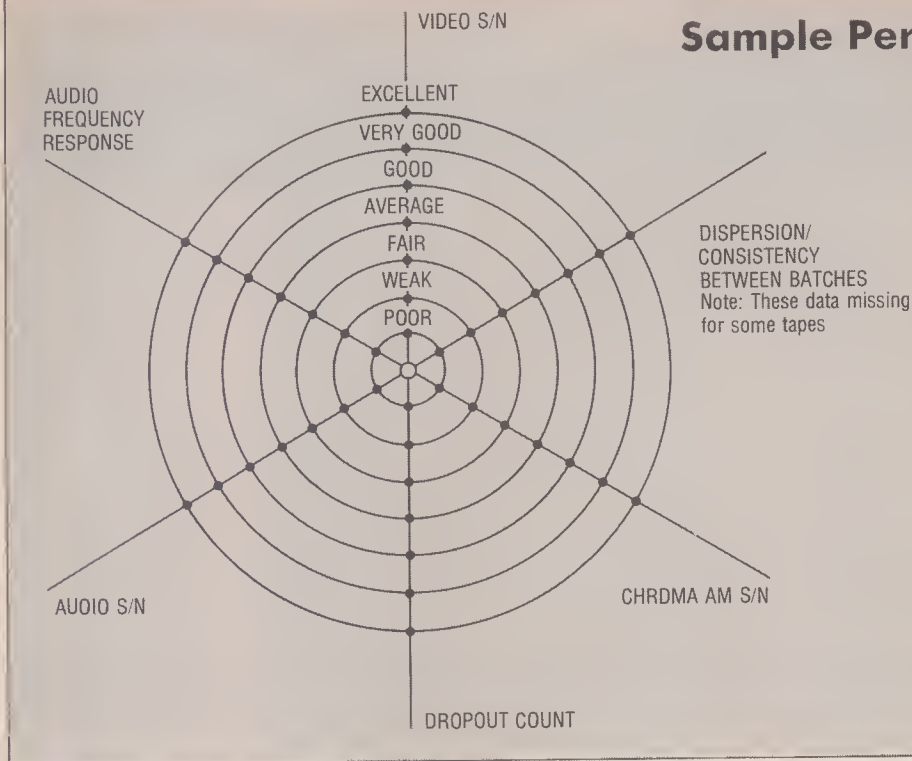
PERFORMANCE OF BETA TAPES

Brand and Grade	Video S/N in dB	Merit Figure	Your Merit Figure	Dispersion	Merit Figure	Your Merit Figure	Chroma AM Noise in dB	Merit Figure	Your Merit Figure	Chroma PM Noise in dB	Merit Figure	Your Merit Figure
BASF STD L-750	-0.2	-2		0.3	7		-0.1	3		-1.8	8	
Fuji STD L-500	+0.2	2		0.2	8		+1.2	7		+0.5	6	
STD L-750	+0.3	3		0.1	9		+1.6	8		+0.5	6	
SHG L-500	+0.3	3		0.2	8		+2.5	10		+1.7	8	
SHG L-750	+0.7	7		0.2	8		+2.0	9		+1.7	8	
SHG L-830	+0.7	7		0.2	8		+2.6	10		+1.7	8	
Hi-Fi L-750	+0.9	9		0.0	10		+2.6	10		+2.2	9	
SuperXG L-500	+0.9	9		0.1	9		+2.2	9		+1.0	7	
Konica STD L-500	+0.7	7		0.1	9		+1.4	7		+1.4	7	
SHG L-500	+1.1	10		a			+2.4	10		+2.5	10	
Laser L-500	+0.7	7		0.1	9		+2.4	10		+2.5	10	
Maxell STD L-750	+0.8	8		0.5	5		+0.4	5		+2.4	9	
HGX L-750	+0.9	9		0.1	9		+1.3	7		+2.1	9	
HGX Gold L-750	+0.9	9		0.0	10		+2.7	10		+2.6	10	
Memorex STD L-750	+0.4	4		a			+1.7	8		+1.9	8	
PD Magnetics HG L-750	+0.7	7		0.3	7		+0.5	5		+1.2	7	
SHG L-500	+1.0	10		0.1	9		+1.7	8		+1.4	7	
SHG L-750	+0.9	9		0.0	10		+2.3	9		+0.9	6	
Polaroid STD L-500	+0.7	7		a			+1.6	8		+1.1	7	
STD L-750	+0.7	7		a			+1.8	8		+1.4	7	
HG L-500	+0.8	8		0.1	9		+1.5	7		+0.4	5	
HG L-750	+0.9	9		0.0	10		+2.0	9		+0.9	6	
RCA STD L-500	+1.0	10		a			+1.8	8		+1.4	7	
STD L-750	+0.9	9		a			+1.6	8		+1.2	7	
SHG L-750	+1.0	10		a			+2.0	9		+0.3	5	
Scotch STD L-500	+0.8	8		0.2	8		+1.6	8		+0.2	5	
STD L-750	+0.7	7		a			0.0	4		-1.0	3	
STD L-830	+0.2	2		0.0	10		+1.5	7		0.0	6	
HGX Plus L-500	+1.0	10		0.1	9		+0.9	6		+1.2	7	
HGX Plus L-750	+0.7	7		a			-1.9	1		+1.6	8	
Sony STD L-500	+0.4	4		0.0	10		+1.8	8		+1.3	7	
STD L-750	0.0	0		0.0	10		+1.5	7		+1.3	7	
STD L-830	+0.2	2		0.6	4		+1.2	7		+1.1	7	
UHG L-500	+1.0	10		0.1	9		+1.4	7		+0.9	6	
UHG L-750	+1.0	10		0.1	9		+1.1	6		+1.1	7	
Pro L-500	+1.0	10		a			+2.4	10		+2.2	9	
TDK STD L-750	+0.6	6		a			+1.1	6		+1.1	7	
HS L-750	+0.8	8		0.2	8		+1.2	7		+1.2	7	
EHG L-750	+0.8	8		0.1	9		+1.3	7		+1.4	7	
Hi-Fi L-750	+0.9	9		0.0	10		+1.5	7		+1.8	8	
HDpro L-750	+1.0	10		0.1	9		+1.5	7		+1.9	8	

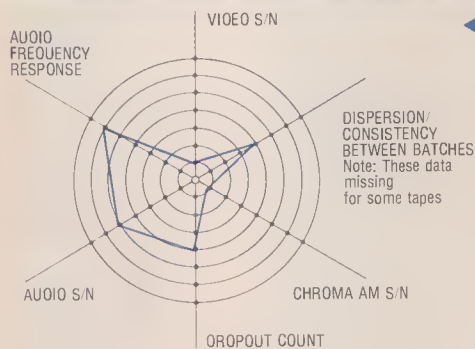
Dropout Count 15 μ sec/ 10 μ sec/ 5 μ sec	Your Merit Figure	Output Loss at 3MHz in dB	Your Merit Figure	Audio S/N in dB	Your Merit Figure	Audio Frequency Response in Hz	Your Merit Figure	Cost	Your Merit Figure	Merit Figure Totals
33/57/71		-4.1		51.9		60-12.5k				
31/47/65		-3.9		50.8		60-12.0k				
34/51/70		-3.7		51.6		60-12.0k				
22/40/65		-4.1		50.9		60-12.0k				
17/27/40		-3.7		51.8		60-12.0k				
35/50/62		-4.1		51.6		60-11.5k				
9/12/23		-3.6		51.8		60-12.5k				
2/3/11		-3.8		53.9		60-12.0k				
18/35/68		-4.2		47.7		60-12.0k				
13/23/40		-4.1		47.9		60-11.5k				
21/31/37		-4.3		47.3		60-10.5k				
23/38/46		-4.2		52.0		60-11.5k				
14/31/38		-3.7		52.7		60-12.0k				
11/25/32		-3.9		53.6		60-12.5k				
36/49/60		-4.3		52.9		57-12.5k				
9/23/51		-3.9		50.7		60-11.5k				
26/30/33		-3.8		51.8		60-11.5k				
17/29/39		-3.9		51.6		60-12.0k				
7/11/13		-4.2		52.1		57-12.5k				
18/33/60		-3.9		51.4		60-12.5k				
22/27/41		-4.0		52.3		60-12.0k				
13/16/21		-4.0		52.8		60-11.5k				
5/8/13		-3.7		51.7		60-12.5k				
16/24/38		-3.9		52.4		60-12.0k				
26/31/56		-3.8		52.6		57-12.5k				
6/17/22		-4.1		50.9		60-12.0k				
31/33/49		-3.9		51.5		60-12.0k				
23/40/56		-4.0		50.4		60-12.0k				
6/9/17		-3.9		52.7		60-12.5k				
11/17/28		-3.7		51.9		57-12.5k				
4/4/9		-4.1		51.8		60-12.5k				
27/30/36		-3.8		51.3		60-12.5k				
32/41/60		-3.9		50.5		60-12.0k				
3/6/7		-3.8		52.6		60-12.5k				
0/3/8		-3.9		51.9		60-12.5k				
3/4/5		-3.7		52.5		60-12.5k				
22/27/41		-3.9		50.2		60-11.5k				
14/16/20		-4.1		50.5		60-12.0k				
2/3/14		-4.1		52.3		60-12.0k				
0/4/17		-4.0		52.9		60-12.5k				
1/3/11		-3.9		53.6		57-12.5k				

*An insufficient number of samples prevented calculation of a figure for dispersion/consistency between batches.

Sample Performance Diagram



With all tapes tested, at least one sample was bought from or exchanged with a local dealer. If that tape is not a big seller with the dealer, that sample could be quite old—and tape quality is getting better rapidly. An old sample could easily pull down the signal-to-noise figures and spread the dispersion index. Keep this in mind as you read through all of our comments. It is recommended that you buy tapes from high volume dealers to insure that the tapes you buy come from fairly recent production. (Some of the following descriptions mention that a number of tapes are tied for first, second, etc. In a few cases we do not highlight ties. You may check for ties on the chart.)

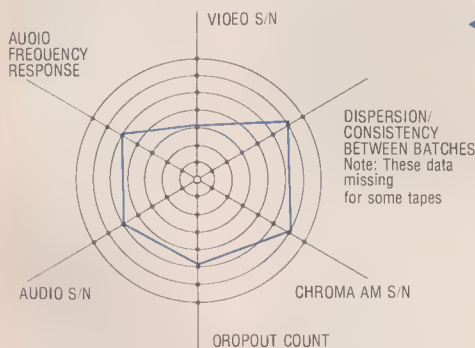
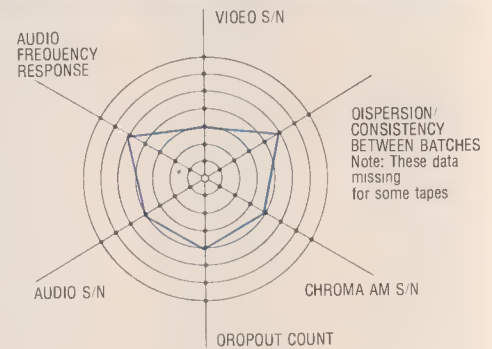


◀ BASF L-500

Not a strong performer with one rating of very good, two of good, two of average, and two of poor. Its strongest area is audio. The BASF high grade was not tested.

Fuji L-500 ▶

An average tape with two ratings of good, three of average, and two of fair. It was better on consistency and audio response and weaker on video and chroma PM S/N.

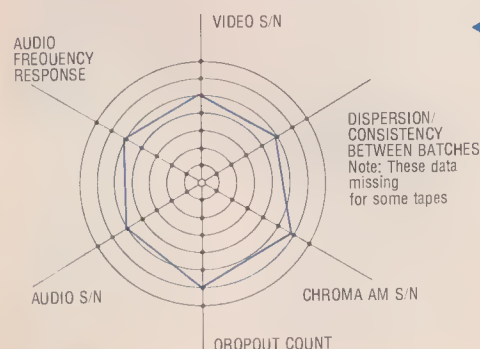
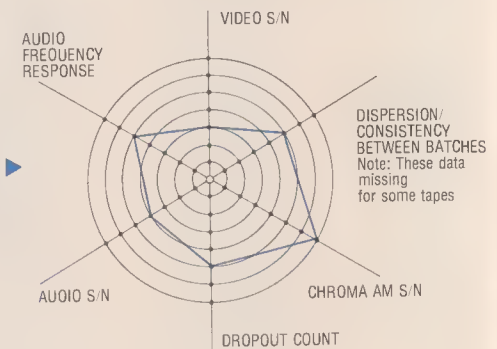


◀ Fuji L-750

An average tape with one rating of very good on consistency, three of good, one of average, and two of fair on video S/N and chroma PM S/N.

Fuji Super High Grade L-500 ▶

A somewhat better tape with a rating of excellent on chroma AM S/N, four ratings of good, one of average, and one of fair on video S/N.

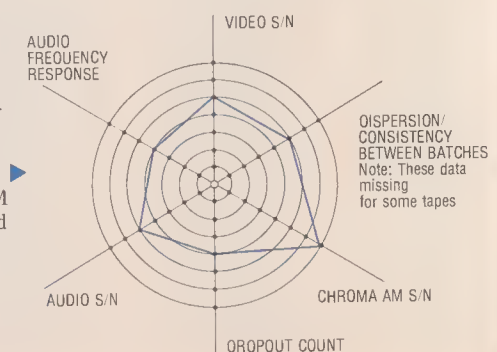


◀ Fuji Super High Grade L-750

Quite a good tape with two ratings of very good and five of good. Its strong areas were chroma AM S/N and dropout count. It is a well-balanced tape.

Fuji Super High Grade L-830 ▶

An excellent performer on chroma AM S/N, it earned four ratings of good and two of average on dropout count and audio frequency response.



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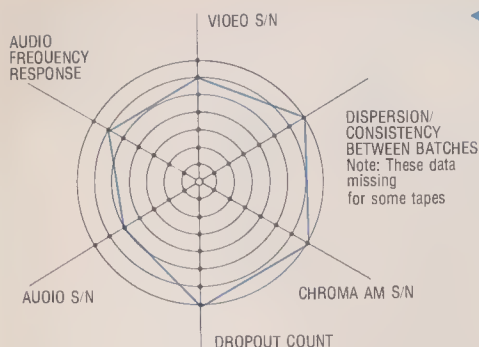
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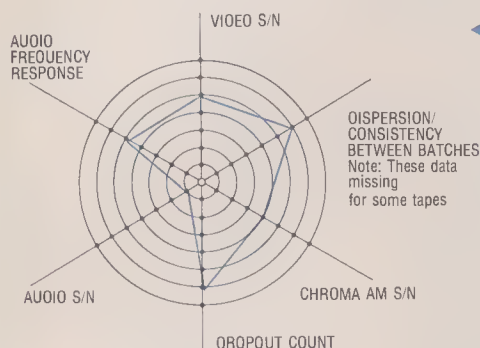
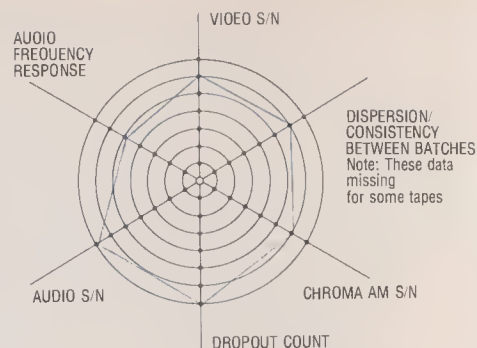


◀ Fuji Hi-Fi L-750

One of the top tapes measured with three ratings of excellent, three of very good, and one of good on audio S/N.

▶ Fuji Super XG H351

Just one sample pulled its average on chroma PM S/N down to average. Two ratings were excellent, three were very good, and one was good. It is still among the five best tapes overall.

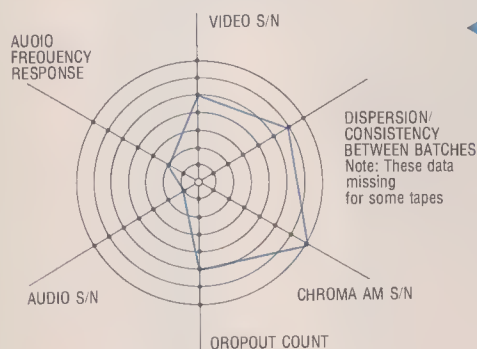
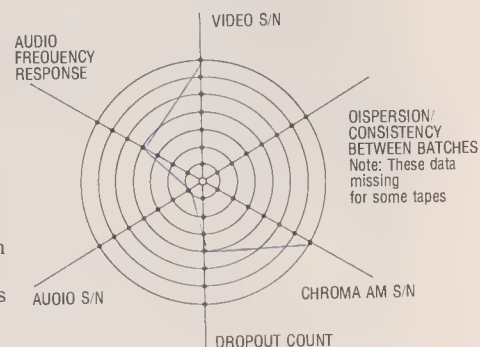


◀ Konica L-500

A good performer with two ratings of very good on consistency and dropouts. Two of its other ratings were good and two average. It was poor on audio S/N.

▶ Konica Super High Grade L-500

Excellent in three areas and average in two others, it was poor on audio S/N, and we had samples of too few batches to judge consistency.

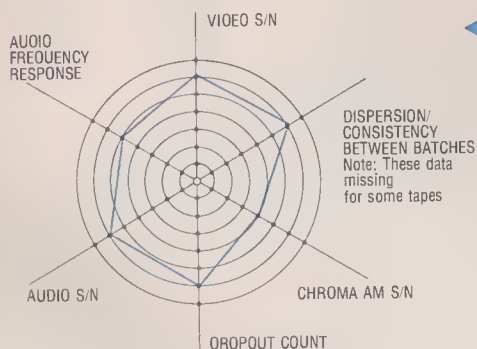
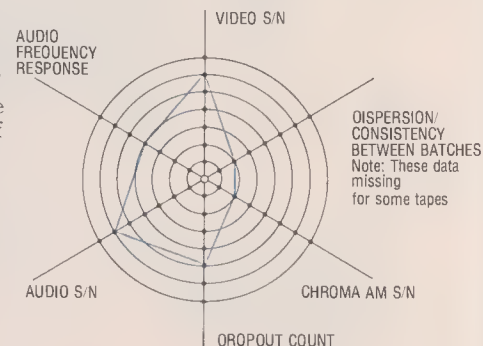


◀ Laser L-500

A sketchy performer with two ratings of excellent on chroma AM and PM S/N, one of very good, two of good, one of weak on audio response, and one of poor on audio S/N.

▶ Maxell L-750

A mixed performer with three ratings of very good, one good, one average, and two weak on consistency and chroma AM S/N.

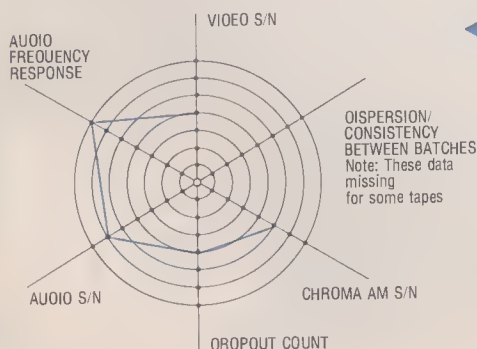
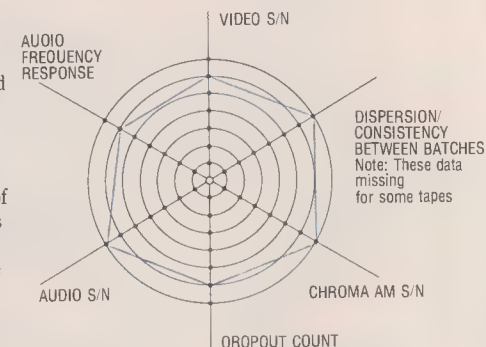


◀ Maxell HGX L-750

A very good performer with five ratings of very good, with one of good on audio frequency response and one of average on chroma AM S/N.

▶ Maxell HGX Gold L-750

The top performer with four ratings of excellent and three of very good. It is a well-balanced tape. The worst ratings (of "very good") can hardly be characterized as weak spots.

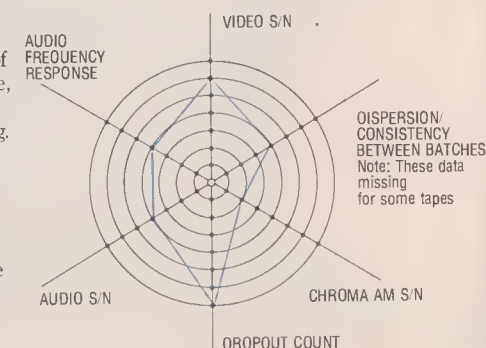


◀ Memorex L-750

A mixed performer with one rating of excellent on audio frequency response, one of very good, two of good, and two of average. No consistency rating.

▶ PD Magnetics High Grade L-750

A spotty performer which had one grade of excellent on dropout count, one of good, four of average, and one of weak on chroma AM S/N.



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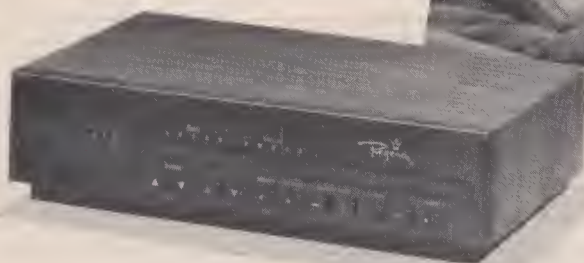
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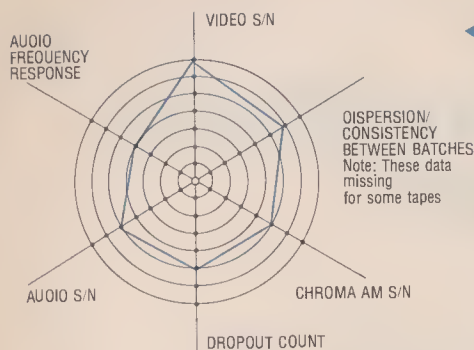
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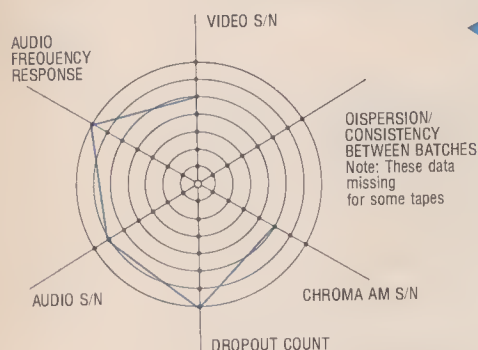
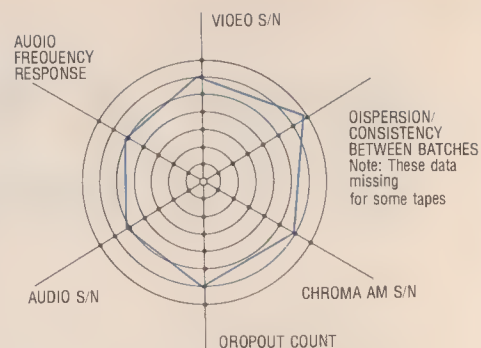


PD Magnetics Super High Grade L-500

A mixed performer which earned an excellent on video S/N plus one very good, three goods, and an average on chroma PM S/N.

PD Magnetics Super High Grade L-750

Marginally better than the L-500, it earned an excellent on consistency, three very goods, two goods, and a fair on chroma PM S/N.

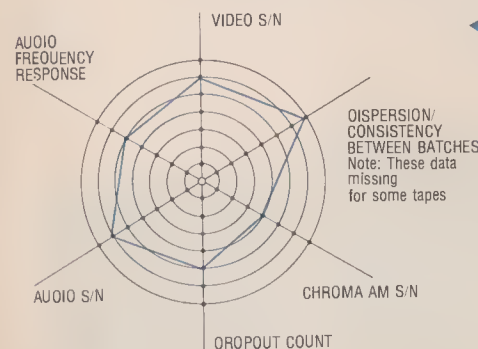
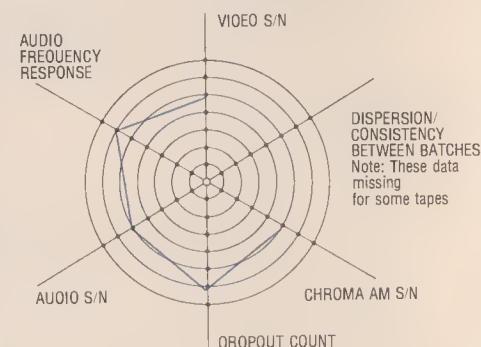


Polaroid L-500

It was excellent on dropouts and audio frequency response with one rating of very good, two of good, and one of average on chroma PM S/N. No consistency rating.

Polaroid L-750

Very good on dropout count and audio frequency response, it earned three ratings of good and one of average on chroma PM S/N. No consistency rating.

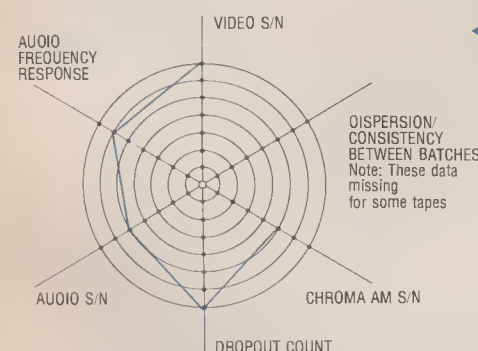
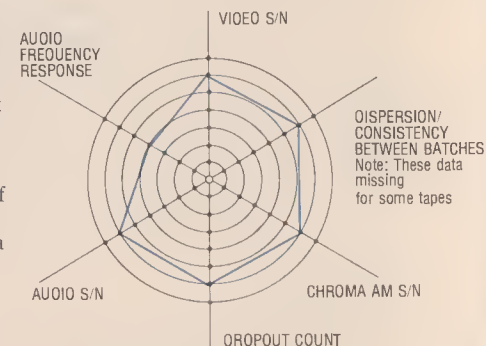


Polaroid High Grade L-500

Excellent on consistency, its other ratings were two of very good, two of good, one of average, and it was weak on chroma PM S/N.

Polaroid High Grade L-750

A strong performer with five ratings of very good, it was average on audio frequency response and fair on chroma PM S/N.

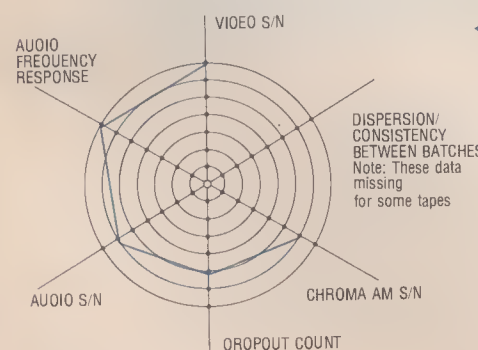
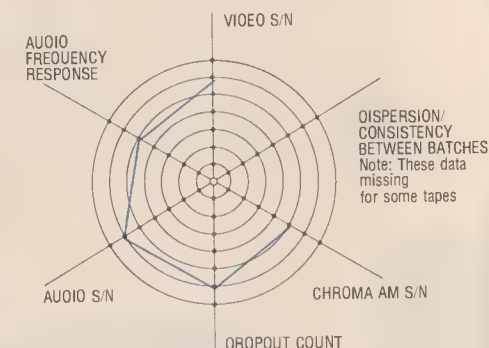


RCA L-500

It was excellent on dropout count and video S/N, very good on audio response, good in two categories, and average on chroma PM S/N. No consistency rating.

RCA L-750

It earned three ratings of very good, two of good, and it was average on chroma PM S/N. We had samples of too few batches for a consistency rating.

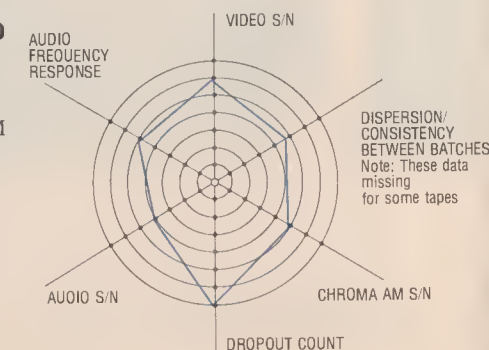


RCA Super High Grade L-750

It was excellent on video S/N and audio frequency response, with two other ratings of very good and one of good—but it was weak on chroma PM S/N. No consistency rating.

Scotch L-500

Excellent on dropout count, its other ratings were one of very good, three of good, one of average, and one of weak on chroma PM S/N.



Now available—A totally unique super wide angle/macro lens. A must for every video camera.



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Compare the difference between the normal wide angle capability of your camera vs. the incredible picture area you'll take in (3 times more!) with the new PAVE Perispheric Super Wide Angle Macro lens.

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Place the PAVE Perispheric lens right up next to a butterfly and you'll stay in focus, capturing precise detail like this—before it takes flight.

the whole family into the shot, without cutting off Aunt Martha and Uncle Fred. You can even take an extreme close-up of the family dog or a garden flower and still be in focus.

The super wide angle capability of this lens also makes it ideal for shooting sports events, business meetings, community happenings and school functions. It's not surprising that institutions like hospital operating rooms are using the Pave Perispheric lens for educational purposes and that

many cable television stations consider the Pave Perispheric lens a sound investment in their equipment inventory.

The quality of this widely acclaimed lens begins in the manufacturing process, with a secret procedure that makes the lens extremely difficult to manufacture. No effort has been spared in the creation of this lens in order to assure you of its remarkable, distortion-free performance. The addition of this totally unique lens to your video camera will provide you with more enjoyment and more versatility than you ever thought possible.

Right now you can own this Perispheric Super Wide Angle Video Lens for the low price of \$129.95 plus \$3 shipping and handling. Order your Pave Perispheric Video lens today and discover the wide range



Simply screw the Perispheric lens onto your existing video lens.

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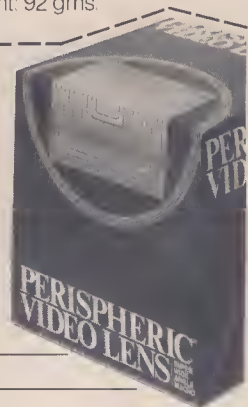
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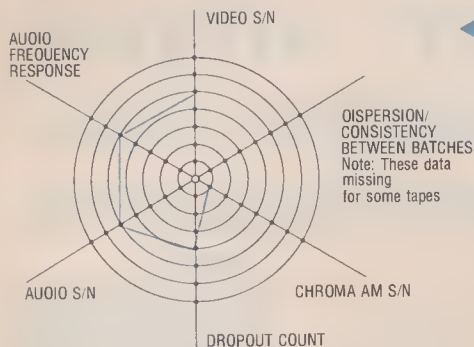
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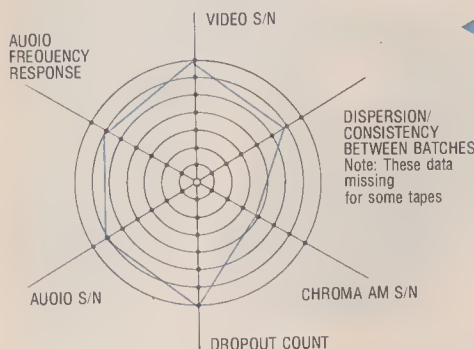
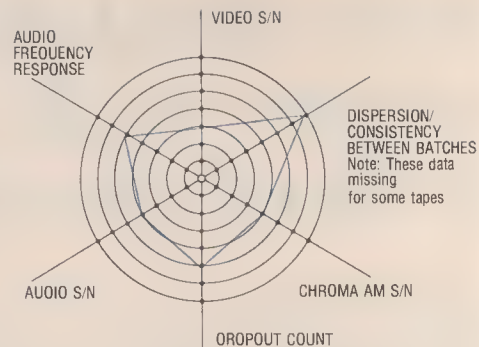


Scotch L-750

It earned three ratings of good, one of average, and two of poor on chroma AM and PM S/N. We had many samples all from the same batch—no consistency rating.

Scotch L-830

It was excellent on consistency and earned two ratings of good and two of average—but it was just fair on chroma AM and PM S/N.

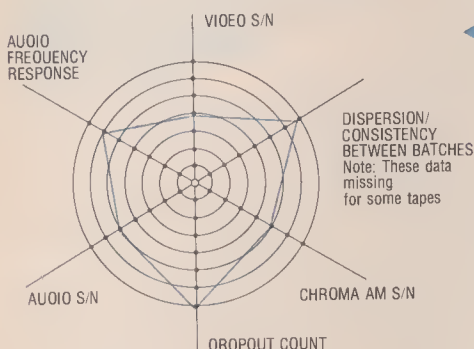
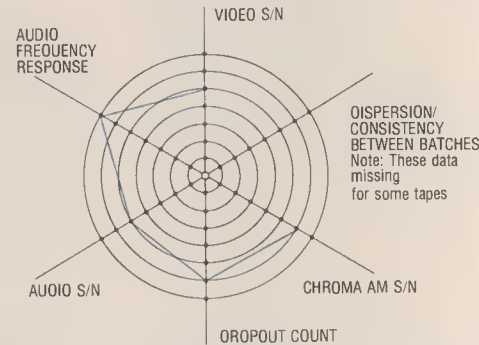


Scotch HGX Plus L-500

It was excellent on dropouts and video S/N and very good on three other characteristics. However it was just average on chroma AM and PM S/N.

Scotch HGX Plus L-750

It was excellent on audio frequency response, with two other ratings of very good and three of good. Samples were all from the same batch—no consistency rating.

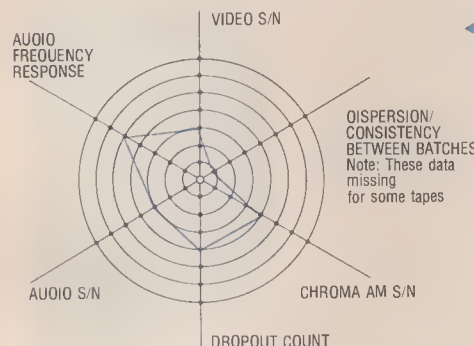
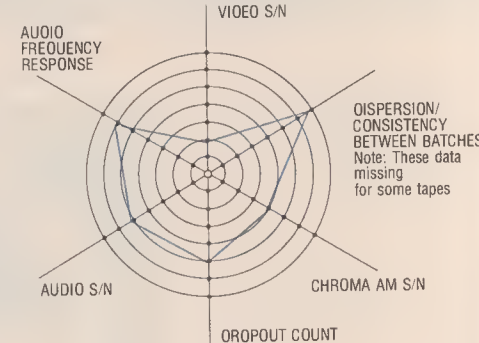


Sony L-500

A good tape with two ratings of excellent on dropout and consistency, one very good, two goods, and one average.

Sony L-750

The most commonly available Beta tape, and our benchmark, had a rating of excellent on consistency, one very good, two goods, two average, and one weak on video S/N.

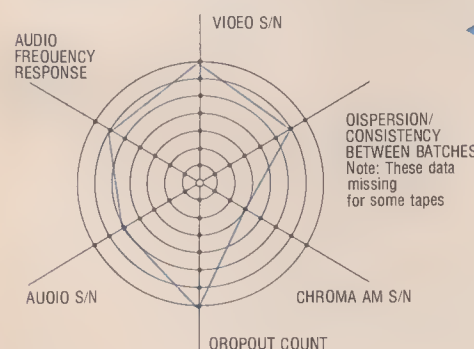
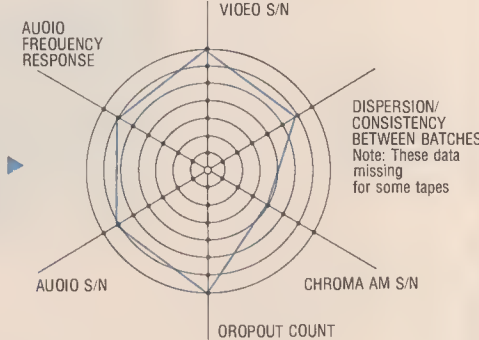


Sony L-830

With four ratings of average, it was good on audio frequency response, fair on video S/N, and poor on consistency.

Sony Ultra High Grade L-500

Excellent on video S/N and dropouts, it earned three very goods—but was average on chroma AM S/N and fair on chroma PM S/N.

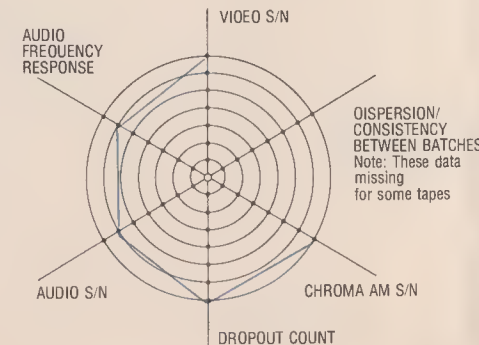


Sony Ultra High Grade L-750

Excellent on video S/N and dropout count, it also earned two very goods, one good, and one average, and it was fair on chroma PM S/N.

Sony Pro L-500

One of the five best tapes, it earned three excellents and three very goods—but we didn't have samples of enough batches to rate consistency.



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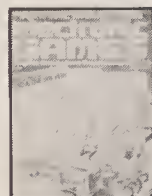
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BERGER-BRAITHWAITE VIDEO TESTS

March 1985

Polaroid P8-1 8mm Camcorder System

RCA FKC2600 'Dimensia' Monitor/Receiver

Toshiba V-S443 Beta Hi-Fi VCR

Multiplex ChannelPlus Upconverter/Combiner

Polaroid 8mm Camcorder System

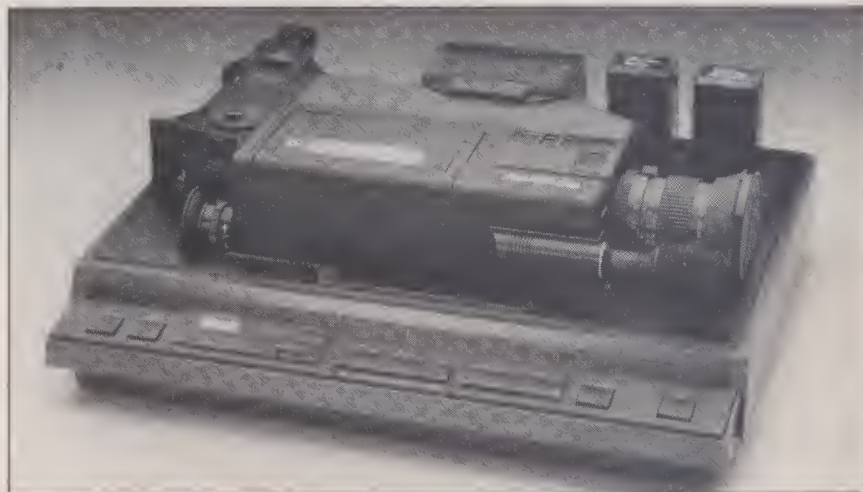


Polaroid was one of the earliest companies to announce an 8mm camcorder system, and after a delay, it may be the second company to release a consumer

8mm VCR. Unless you've spent most of the last 40 years on the moon, you know the name Polaroid—some of us still remember the Model 110A still camera and the amazement of seeing pictures of the picnic before you left it.

Kodak was first to get an 8mm system into stores, and if Polaroid is second, the pattern of the 8mm format being sponsored by photo companies should be obvious. This is not Polaroid's first venture into video. The Polavision was an attempt to display film on a TV screen. Polaroid's new 8mm system does away with light-sensitive film completely—but not with all film. Videotape is also a kind of film, but one that is sensitive to *magnetic* impulses. In a way, the switch from photography to video was predictable. With the high cost of photographic film and the long wait until processed film is returned, impatience, convenience, and price signed the death warrant for 8mm film-type home movies back in 1978. It was just a matter of time until video took over.

As our picture of the 8mm camcorder shows, it is a simple-looking box, reminiscent of early 8- and 16mm movie cameras. It has some of the restrictions of early cameras too, but it is easier to operate. With the old cameras you had to consult the instructions that came with the film and make corresponding adjustments to the camera's iris. With this 8mm camcorder you don't even have to do that. Just put in a cassette, point, and press the trigger.



Photos by Les Morsillo

It even tells you when there isn't enough light, though it doesn't tell you when there is too much. In short, if you could use a movie camera, you can use this camcorder. You can see the pictures as you make them if you're willing to tote a monitor with you; there's a zoom lens, and light balancing is a snap.

By itself the camera will only record. Though it has a Rewind button, it has no controls for playback or the simplest tape-handling chores. To play a recording you must remove the pistolgrip and fit the camera into a "player." The player connects with the camera through a multipin connector normally concealed by the handgrip. On the player are the traditional VCR controls and connectors that make the system usable with other standard video equipment. The AC-operated player can also charge the battery that resides in the handgrip during camcorder operation.

The system as a whole provides the functions of a basic portable VCR and camera—but no tuner, at a price that is

about the same as a top-of-the-line half-inch portable VCR with a tuner/timer but without a camera. Polaroid hasn't shown a tuner/timer for the system up to this point. The company sees it as appealing to the former 8mm film buff who wants worry-free preservation of personal memories. The system is to become available "early in 1985."

Description. The Polaroid 8mm system, at this point, consists of two major parts: the P8-C1 Video Camcorder and P8-P1 8mm Video Playback Deck plus the basic accessories to record live events and play them back through your TV. It also allows you to copy video/audio material from other formats and record TV programs if you can supply them to the system as audio and video.

The P8-C1 camcorder is about the size of a fat hardcover book, about 8-1/2 by 5-1/2 by 2-1/2 inches, with a lens sticking out of the front, an eyepiece out of the back, and a pistolgrip attached at the bottom front. Its overall dimensions are 12

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 Switch video only. Sustain audio. Professional results.

Switcher electronically sw/ between (2) inputs.

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What Can HYBRID-8'S POWER Do For Me? Hybrid's enhance section (3 controls) gives you the power to subtly change all your video. You carefully adjust Hybrid's powerful enhance, neg. noise amp and color balance controls to perk up edge sharpness and detail, erase video noise "snow" and add vitality to color hue of virtually every video medium. That means VCR playback, camera image, video disc, network TV, even cable TV is improved. Hybrid makes the subtle difference - adds the fine edge, that extra sparkle that transforms ordinary video into truly **EXTRAORDINARY video!** Plus, Hybrid edits, switches, duplicates, times and processes audio in stereo. You'll love your Hybrid-8!

Who Can Use HYBRID? Every Video Cassette Recorder owner.

I Own (1) VCR. How Do I Use HYBRID To Enhance? Easy! Put your VCR in playback, run the signal as shown and watch your video improve. Hybrid's enhancer filters and heightens your video signal for vibrant colors and sharpened outlines. Transforms ordinary viewing to **EXTRAORDINARY viewing.**

How About (2) Or More VCR Set-Up? Hybrid can handle up to (2) mastering and (3) copying VCR's, plus drive your TV or monitor. Hybrid-8 can serve as the center of your video system for enhanced viewing, for duplicating, for editing, for special effects switching.

Cable TV Power Connected as above, Hybrid enhances cable.

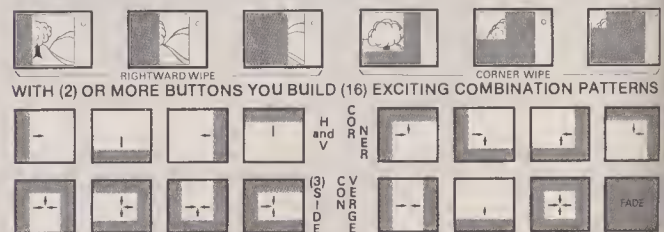
Copying POWER With Hybrid's copyguard auto stabilizer you can copy any video movie you choose.* Hybrid's color balance control, enhancer and neg. noise amp make razor sharp copies. **EXTRAORDINARY COPIES** every time. *Check legality.

Extraordinary Dissolve Audio First ever! Think about this one. You have music video on A and B. Watch - audio A turns down to zero while audio B turns up to full volume. In the middle you hear A and B audio beautifully blended. Both terrific. Both undistorted. The way professional studios mix audio.

New Stereo TV Hybrid gives you stereo capacity. With Hybrid you're prepared for future stereo VCRs and stereo TV!

Editing POWER Hybrid's (3) fader controls are super for editing home video movies (for example, weddings). Fade button allows alteration from full bright to black in a graduated way avoiding jerkiness between scenes and lending that dramatic smooth touch to entrances and endings. Duration control assures fade time will be perfectly even and consistent. X-CH fade, fades to black, switches inputs, then fades back in automatically!

Powerful New Special Effects Generator (No one else has it!)



And yes, you guessed it-Hybrid's Fade and X-CH fade buttons work with S.E.G. creating wipe to black and extraordinary X-CH wipe too!

Ease of Operation The new Hybrid is already developing a reputation for being the processor with the easiest operation. (Believe it or not that's not an unimportant consideration when shopping for a processor.) Hybrid's front panel is clean and legible. Rear panel is logically arranged. Our manual is written in

HYBRID 8 GIVES YOU THE POWER!

Enhancer Section (3) controls improve VCR playback, camera, disc, cable, you name it! **Enhance** improves detail sharpness. **Neg. Noise Amp** clears video "snow". **Color Balance** perfects color hues.

E/T Elapsed Time Meter Measures Elapsed Tape Time Exactly. Selectable Minutes or Seconds Readout.

RF Output for cable TV enhancement. Connects to TV set.

Spotlighting

Scrolling

Targeting

Bouncing Ball

Fade (remoted)

Auto/Manual Switch controls vertical and horizontal wipes.

A/B Switch (remoted)

Translucency Control makes wipes translucent.

Manual Converge knobs permit manual adjust of wipes

Zip Stick Positioning Handle mobilizes effects

E/T ELAPSED TIME METER

00:00

PAUSE

COLOR BALANCE

MIN SEC

RF OUTPUT

3 4

HYBRID-8 S.E.G.
VIDEO DUPLICATOR



every day language. No mumbo-jumbo you can't understand. You will succeed. Set up can be accomplished in record time. If there is a problem just phone "Mr. Hook-Up".

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Phone "Mr. Hook-Up" If you have a connection question before, during or after purchase of your Hybrid, phone "Mr. Hook-Up" (our whiz kid hook-up engineer) here at VIP. He'll be glad to help "get you connected!"

Powerful Value In Video's Dec. issue, Hybrid, with its eight features was selected best video processor value. "The Hybrid contains one of the best image enhancers we've ever seen -- this unit does it all -- what it does it does better than any other unit on the market -- we consider it one of the best buys in video." Henry Cohen, Associate Editor Video Magazine

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New Zip Stick Controller For Hybrid-8 (optional) Power-packed Zip Stick gives you all features above plus:

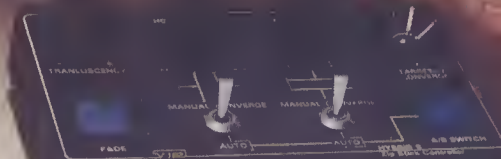
Spotlighting You're playing back a tape. You need to emphasize a person or object with a moveable field of light. Yes you can do it. Use "Spotlighting", "Shape" a spotlight with manually converged wipes. Translucency control accentuates spotlight/background borderline contrast. Zip Stick zips spotlight to desired person. Yes, adjustments can be made on the fly. Works great during taping or playback. Even use for live camera work!

Scrolling Control a long thin spotlight as it scrolls through credits. Dynamic effect.

Fade/Wipe to Target You need to end your tape by converging a boxwipe to a moderator slightly off center screen. You can do it. Use "Targeted Converge". Select a boxwipe on Hybrid. Zip Stick zooms vanishing point wherever you desire. Ingenious technique.

Video Bouncing Ball "Did you see that!?" Now you can point to "that", "bouncing ball" style. Zip Stick instantly zips white dot to object of interest. *Creates Great Excitement!*

Option Price: \$199.00 Mounts next to Hybrid or remotes on 6' cable





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Videotests



The P8-C1 camcorder has only a few controls for highly simplified operation. It is a good replacement for film-type 8mm movie cameras.

inches high by 2.6 wide by 12.6 deep and it weighs about 3-3/4 pounds without the battery, which resides in its handgrip and weighs 3-1/2 ounces. With another ounce or two for the cassette, shooting-ready it weighs about 4 pounds.

It has few controls. On the back below the focusing eyepiece for the viewfinder are buttons for Eject and Rewind, a Dew indicator, and a Power switch. One good thing about the eyepiece is a lock ring for the focusing mechanism, so it won't go out of adjustment unintentionally and produce out-of-focus pictures. The viewfinder is an optical TTL (through the lens) type which must be adjusted to the shooter's vision or it will not operate correctly. The right side is bare, but on the left side the cassette hatch is located at the top rear. Farther front, just behind the lens, is a spring-loaded power-zoom switch, and just behind that are the indoor/outdoor filter switch and Normal/BLC (backlight control) switch for shooting dark subjects against light backgrounds. Near the front bottom edge of the same side is a 2.5mm subminiature phone jack that outputs video so you can monitor the scene electronically as it is shot.

On the front is a 8.5-57mm 6X power/manual zoom lens with a normal focusing range of about 39 inches to infinity. There's no auto-focus mechanism, so you must follow focus while you shoot. On the stubby manual-zoom lever is a button that lets you into the macro focusing range. Then you can put the subject about 3/4-inch from the front surface of the lens. Below the lens is a small white button that actuates the auto

white-balance circuitry. After you've set the indoor/outdoor switch, press that button until the W in the viewfinder window goes on to tell you that white balance is complete. Fixed to the top of the camcorder and overhanging the lens is the condenser microphone.

On the bottom is a threaded hole for tripod-mounting a bar to which you attach the carrying strap and detachable pistol-grip. There's a lot more to that grip than meets the eye because it is also the battery compartment. The battery is inserted through a small door in the bottom of the handle. At the front of the grip is the usual trigger to start recording. It would normally require constant pressure to continue, but a lock button on the right side where your right thumb normally would fall lets you lock the trigger in shooting position. There's also an adjustable strap that goes around the back of your hand. It may be installed on either side of the grip for the convenience of left- or right-handed shooting. At the back of the grip, near the camera body, is a button and safety catch to release the grip from the body. Getting the hang of detaching the grip is the hardest operation you'll have to perform with this camera. When the grip is removed it exposes a multipin connector that makes all the connections to the player.

The player looks like a platform with a tower sticking up from it, and right in front of the tower is an indentation covered with some non-scratch material. Projecting from the top of the tower is a flap, and from its middle is a connector at just the right height to mate with the one for the cam-

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FROM buttons - 10 program sources.
7 A, V sources 3 RF sources

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TO buttons are 8 destinations

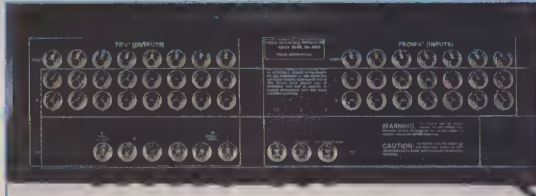
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Back Panel View Shows 3 Matrix

Video	Matrix 7 input, 8 output
Stereo	Matrix 7 input, 8 output
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Total: 10 in 8 out + 2 RF Mods	

Figure 1: Build A Four Camera Studio Use VSM as a routing switcher, and Hybrid-8 as an S.E.G. Get great results.

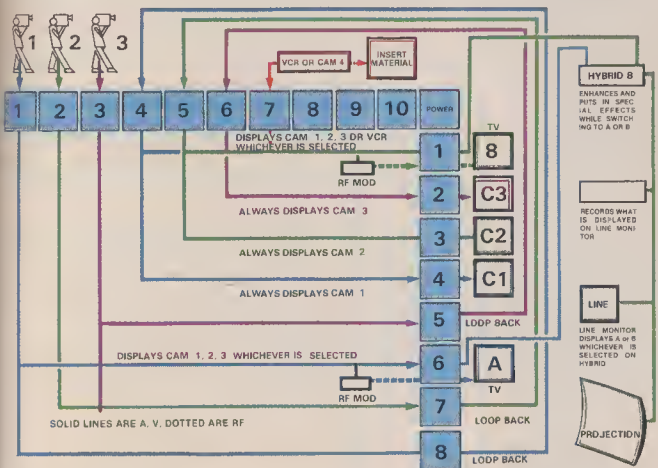


Figure 2: Same as 1, but shows a production in progress.

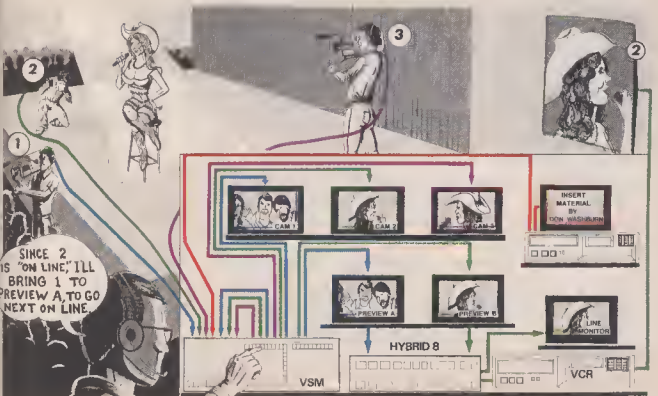
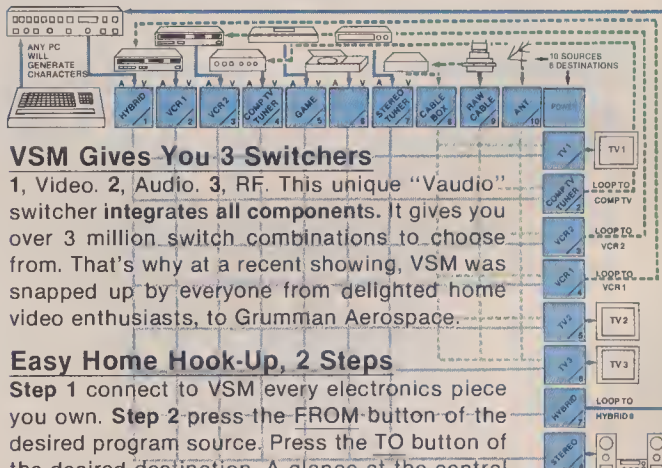


Figure 3: A Super, Home Set-Up Over 3 million switch combinations. Integrates all A, V and RF components.



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Easy Studio Should you wish, VSM beautifully couples with Hybrid-8 to yield a Four Camera Studio, as illustrated.

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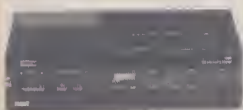
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Test Report:

Polaroid P8-1 8mm Camcorder System

DATA

Date of test: December 1984

Suggested retail price: \$1650

Weight: 3.74 pounds without battery; battery 3.5 ounces

Dimensions: 12 x 2.6 x 12.6 inches (h/w/d), camera; 6 x 15.6 x 12.9 inches (h/w/d), player deck

Power requirements: 6VDC, 7.8W, camera; 120VAC, 60Hz, 40W, player deck

Image sensor: 1/2-inch (diagonal) CCD (Charge Coupled Device) microchip

Lens: F1.4, 6X (9.5-57mm) power/manual zoom, auto iris, with macro range

Filter diameter: 49mm

Minimum focusing distance: 39 inches in normal range

Minimum focusing distance, macro: 1/2-inch from the lens

Field of closest focus (not including macro): 3 x 4 inches, tele; 18 x 24 inches, wide angle

Minimum illumination: 30 lux, may need ND (neutral density) filter for extra bright scenes

Auto focus: no

White balance: indoor/outdoor switchable filter, and pushbutton-activated auto white balance—indicator in finder lights when white balancing is complete

Sensitivity: fixed

Viewfinder: TTL (through the lens) optical, with adjustable eyepiece, LED indicators for low battery (B), low light (U), white balance (W), recording (steady V), tape near end (flashing V), VCR heads dirty (V flashes for 9 seconds and then becomes steady); note: video output provided for monitoring picture electronically; you provide the monitor

Viewfinder controls: focusing eyepiece with locking ring

Auto fode: no

VCR controls: trigger with lock button in handgrip, rewind and eject buttons on rear panel

Microphone: unidirectional back-electret condenser type

Cable; length: not applicable

Plug: 20-pin connector plugs directly into player for playback and audio/video or tuner (accessory, not tested)

Accessories: for P8-C1 camcorder—lenshood and cap, eyecup cover, video monitoring cable, shoulder strap, battery,

case

Tape format: 8mm for use with MP (metal particle) tape; not recommended for use with current ME (metal evaporated) tape

Tape speed: 14.345mm/sec

Play speed select: single speed

Still frame: yes, with possible noise bars

Frame advance: no

Slow motion: no

Speed play: no

Rapid search: see "Cue & review"

Cue & review: 6X forward and reverse; uses Fast Forward and Rewind buttons alternating between functions (see "Operation" section)

Visible FF and Rew: no

Fast forward/rewind time: 1-1/2 min. for 90-min. cassette, measured

Remote pause: no

Remote: wired (optional, not tested)

Separate eject: yes, both on camcorder and on player control panel

Counter digits: 4

Counter memory: yes

Program start locator/index/cue: no

Audio dub: no

Video dub: no

Auto rewind: yes

Stereo: no

Hi-Fi: specification similar to FM radio and broadcast TV (see text)

TV tuner: optional accessory not yet available; you may record TV material supplied in audio/video form from TV tuner or monitor/receiver

Accessories: for P8-P1 player—dustcover, dustcover hinges, audio and video cable, antenna cable, transformer

RESULTS & RATINGS

Horizontal resolution: 240 lines

S/N, video luminance: 46.3dB

S/N, chroma AM: 42.8dB

S/N, chroma PM: 40.6dB

Audio frequency response: 30-15,000Hz, rated; 20-16,000Hz, -3dB, measured

S/N, audio: 64dB

Audio distortion: 0.4%

Overall picture quality: very good/excellent compared to 1/2-inch VCRs

Audio quality: excellent compared to linear tracks on 1/2-inch VCRs; poor compared to Beta or VHS Hi-Fi

Ease of operation: excellent (see text)

Overall performance: very good

corder. To join camcorder and player, lift the flap and slide the camcorder backward on the non-scratch area until the connector on the camera and the one on the tower are correctly seated. Then lower the flap. To the right of the tower are two hatches into which batteries may be inserted for charging. At left is an indentation in which you rest the pistolgrip for storage, and there are a few other indentations for the lenshood, viewfinder eyepiece, and one to let your fingers get under the camcorder for easy handling of the camcorder. When the two are mated, you have no need for the controls on the camera since a complete set is available on a control panel at the front of the player.

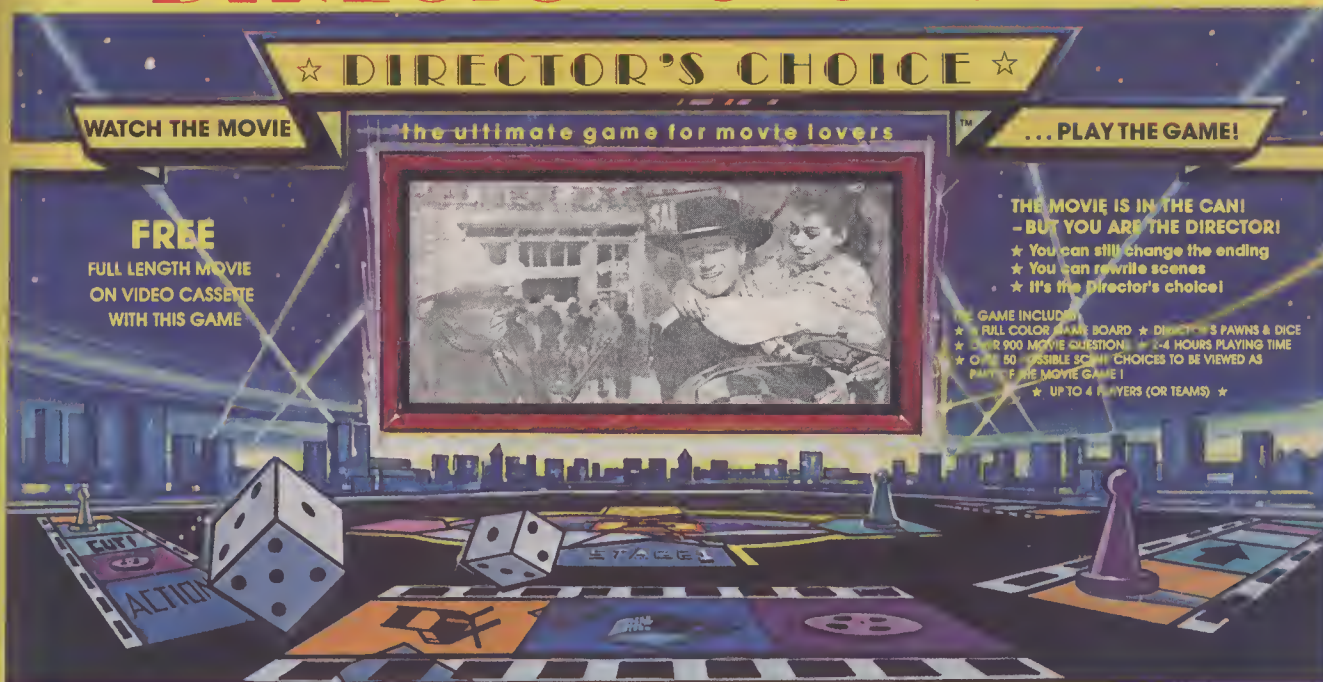
The control panel is a little lower than

the surface of the player and slopes gently downward. At the extreme left is the Power button with one for Eject next to it. Next to that is a slightly raised area with the counter and tiny buttons for Reset and Memory. To the right of that are buttons for Rewind/Reverse Search, Play, Fast Forward/Forward Search, Pause/Still, Stop, VCR/TV, and Record. Under the lip of the projection is a slider for sharpness and on the right end of the base is a 3.5mm jack for a wired remote control—which we did not test.

The sides and bottom are bare but for air holes, and on the back—in addition to the holes—are the power cord and an AC convenience outlet. There are also F-connectors so you can put the player in

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series with the UHF feed to your TV and leave the player permanently connected, plus a switch to control whether the RF output of the player will be on Channel 3 or 4. Two pairs of RCA-type pin connectors are provided for connecting video and audio inputs and outputs. The P8 system offers only mono sound. A hinged cover is provided on the player for dust-free storage of the camcorder—but it may be easily removed for more convenient operation.

Operation. With so few controls on the camcorder, it's easy to use. Remove it

from the player and attach the pistolgrip; put in a battery and cassette; turn it on and set the white balance; then point and shoot. If you were not the last person to use it, also check the adjustment of the viewfinder eyepiece. If you want to monitor the picture electronically as you shoot, connect the supplied cable between the camcorder and a monitor. Though you can rewind the tape, you can't play it, so you can't do reliable editing in the camera—but you can string shots together without glitches.

When it is attached to the player, you

may record from audio/video sources and play back tapes. The controls provided are similar to those on the simplest VCRs. The one variation on how the controls normally work is Search. If you're in Play, the first time you touch a button you get Search in the direction you selected. If you touch that same button, the picture will go away and the tape will move at the fast-forward/rewind speed. If you touch the button a third time, the picture comes back and you go into Search mode. Press Play to resume normal playback. Batteries charge when the Power switch on the player is off, and switching between which battery is charged, and when charging stops, is automatic.

Performance. Picture quality is very good by half-inch standards. Horizontal resolution is 240 lines and video signal-to-noise ratio is 46.3dB. Chroma AM S/N is 42.8dB and chroma PM S/N is 40.6dB. You can't tell what kind of VCR is being used just by looking at the screen.

On audio, the unit performs between the best of linear-track recording and Hi-Fi quality. Its frequency response is rated at 30-15,000Hz, ± 1 -3dB. The preproduction sample we tested was flat from 20-16,000 Hertz within 3dB. Its audio S/N measured 64dB, 1dB below its rating, and total harmonic distortion was 0.4 percent. That is not as good as half-inch Hi-Fi VCRs, but it's above the specs for broadcast TV.

We've mentioned how easy it is to use as we've gone along, and we stick with our evaluation that it is among the simplest video gear we have tested—partly because there are so few features. In general, the more features and options a piece of equipment offers, the more complex it is to operate.

Conclusion. Both the camcorder and player are easy to use and produce good pictures and sound. However, they were designed with the film buff in mind because they lack most of the conveniences that video buffs have become accustomed to. There isn't even an electronic viewfinder and, of course, you can't play back in the field. So if you've used good portable half-inch video gear before, you'll find the system a bit restrictive. If this is your first bout with video, you'll be pleased as punch because of its simplicity. It is a successful electronic version of 8mm photography—and the price, plus convenience, will appeal to those with basic recording needs.

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RCA 'Dimensia' Monitor/Receiver



We've been punching the name Dimensia into a number of our reviews for the last five months, and with good reason. It is RCA's name for a

family of components that redefines all that was formerly thought of as an audio/video system. The system consists of a VKT700 VCR (reviewed VIDEO, February 1984), MSA100 stereo audio amplifier, MCD140 Compact Disc player, MTR120 audio-cassette recorder, MAT110 AM/FM tuner, MTT130 phonograph turntable, a choice of two types of external speakers—and coordinating all of these devices is the first truly "intelligent" monitor/receiver, the Dimensia FKC2600/FKC2601. Together they form a unique audio/video system controlled by a single remote control and capable of doing multiple tasks at the same time, and doing each at a level that stretches the state of the art.

This review will only scratch the surface of what all these components can do. But imagine being able to set the VCR to tape from scrambled cable programming, the audio-cassette recorder to tape from FM, and then puzzling through your taxes on a personal computer, with its output displayed on the screen of the FKC2600 from the RGB input—all set in motion from a single remote. And imagine being able to monitor each recording at the touch of a button and modifying it if you so desire. That is what "intelligent" toys are all about, and the Dimensia system is the first to achieve such a level of sophistication. You can be sure that there will be many imitations, and there are competitors (see Norman Schreiber's story on "Super Systems" in the January 1985 issue of VIDEO)—but none reaches this level of sophistication.

The hardest part of reviewing such a system is figuring what should be covered and what should not. We decided that the audio amplifier, phonograph, AM/FM tuner, CD player, and speakers are truly audio components and would be best left for magazines dedicated to audio. We will say, though, that each rates high in its class. We have not mentioned the cabinetry that is available to house these components. It offers a variety of arrangements of the components and provides a harmonious high-tech environment that makes the system attractive and easy to use.

The system's major advance is the flexibility and harmony with which the components operate. Much of the credit must go to the monitor: A separate microprocessor within it receives signals from the

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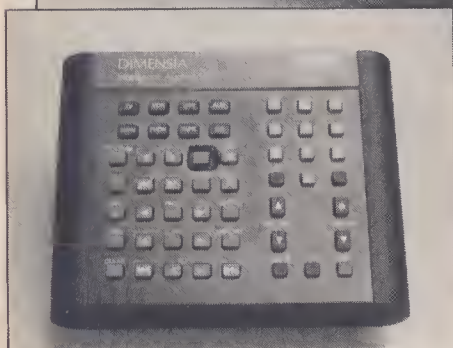
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Dimensia's rather large remote lets you control all operations of all Dimensia devices except for physically loading and unloading the cassettes and discs.



remote control, decides to which component the command is addressed, and routes the command to that piece of equipment. It further remembers what components are performing which tasks and can display the status of each active component, should you forget what tasks you have assigned the system. And the *piece de resistance* is a single remote control that not only directs commands to specific components, but—through the monitor—controls any additional equipment that would be needed to use that component; e.g., turning on the VCR by remote also turns on the TV and audio amplifier.

One note: All these components together are in the \$5000 to \$6000 range. However, each may be purchased separately and the system may be put together over time as your budget allows and your needs require. The remote control comes with the monitor, replacing any other re-

The monitor/receiver's patch panel (below) offers inputs and outputs for traditional audio/video sources plus RGB video. In addition, there are special jacks for the control lines that let the monitor control other Dimensia devices.

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Videotests

mote controls that may be supplied with other components.

Description. All of Dimensia's features are delivered in a compact cabinet not much larger than the picture tube. It is 21-3/4 inches high by 25-1/4 wide by 18-11/16 deep, weighing just under 100 pounds. The cabinet is black with silver trim and the tinted glass in front of the CRT enhances contrast and reduces the effect of reflections.

At first it might seem to have no front-panel controls, but as you get closer the broken silver line just above the picture tube comes into focus as a series of tab-like buttons. Just left of center are 10 buttons for tuning labeled 0 through 9/IN (we'll get to the "IN" later). Just right of center are four buttons for selecting TV, IN1 (input 1), IN2 (input 2), and IN3 (input 3). Pushing 9/IN followed by a digit 1, 2, or 3 has the same effect as pushing IN1, etc. These select the corresponding audio/video inputs on the back panel. The rightmost group of buttons are for Volume Up, Volume Down, and Power. In normal operation you'll hardly ever use these buttons because all their functions are duplicated on the remote.

There are few front-panel indicators because most of the large quantity of information that the Dimensia monitor provides comes via on-screen displays. However, just above the discrete input selectors are LEDs corresponding to the buttons, plus one more to signify that the RGB input is active. Above these is another small row of indicators: Audio B, Set, Stereo, and DNR. The Audio B light indicates if an SAP (second audio program) is present in the broadcast, and the Set light indicates if the Audio B selector switch is set to receive Audio B. The Stereo light lets you know if the program is being broadcast in stereo; if the Stereo/Mono switch is in the stereo position, the receiver automatically delivers the sound in stereo or mono depending on how it is broadcast. The DNR light indicates if the DNR (Dynamic Noise Reduction) circuitry is switched on. Also on that panel are windows for the remote control sensor and the room-light sensor, which automatically adjusts the picture for current lighting conditions.

It might seem that there are no more controls on the set, but switches are hidden behind that panel along the top edge. Flip down that panel and you'll find the standard picture controls at the extreme left. In addition to Color, Tint, Black Level (brightness), and Picture are controls for Sharpness, Bass, and Treble. They are all rotary controls. Almost centered and to the left of the indicators—which shine through a window—are a row of switches. The left one is a three-position switch for speaker selection. In its Off position both the internal audio amplifier and internal speakers are inactive; in the Internal position both are active; and in the External position the internal amplifier is on to drive

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Videotests

external speakers, but the internal speakers are inactive. The monitor will drive any speakers with an impedance of 6 to 8 ohms. Next is the Audio B switch, which automatically delivers SAP when it is set. Then there is the Stereo/Mono switch which you should leave in the stereo position since stereo/mono switching is really automatic. It should be moved to the Mono position only if you are in a fringe area and a stereo broadcast is too noisy. The mono position forces the stereo signal to be treated as mono. Next is the DNR on/off. DNR is a noise-reduction system for cutting hiss out of any signal. It does not require encoding and does not affect the frequency balance of the system, as do noise reduction systems requiring encoding. Then there is an on/off switch for Auto Color, followed by an Air/Cable switch to select whether the channel-tuning sequence will be appropriate for broadcast (air) or cable.

The top and bottom of the cabinet are bare, but on each side is a grille covering the internal speakers. On each side are a five-inch high compliance woofer and two-inch tweeter. The back of the set has three distinct jack panels plus the socket for the detachable AC cord which must be plugged into a grounded (three-prong) outlet. Low on the left side are two F-connectors in depressions—actually the antenna terminals for the tuner. A bit above that is another depression with five F-connectors. These are for a switching system that lets you select any one of three VHF/cable sources. The output of that switcher (central terminal) is connected to the VHF input terminal on the panel below it. Three of the other four terminals are for inputs, but the one in the top left corner is for cable. The fifth terminal at top right is an output to a cable decoder box.

At the top left corner is a large jack panel for audio and video connections, plus a set of terminals for external speakers. There are three sets of video inputs, with input 3 dedicated to the Dimensia VCR and input 1 providing a set of loop-through bridged outputs for video and stereo/mono audio. (All through these sets of jacks, mono inputs are fed to the right channel, and the system will automatically feed both channels with mono sound.) Inputs 2 and 3 have an additional jack for Control, which should be used only with Dimensia components, to send/receive system commands. At the top center of the panel are jacks for the red, green, blue, and "enable" inputs for RGB, and the sync for RGB is fed through the video input of input 3.

At the bottom center are left and right audio inputs to an external non-Dimensia audio amplifier (labeled Hi-Fi). At the top right are two rows (stereo/video inputs and outputs). They are a set of terminals to let you access the tuner irrespective of input selection, and they let you put signal-processing components between the tuner and monitor functions of the monitor/

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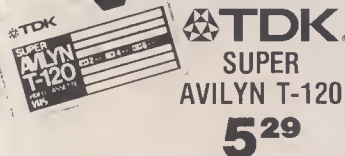
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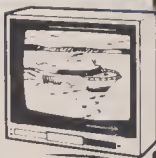


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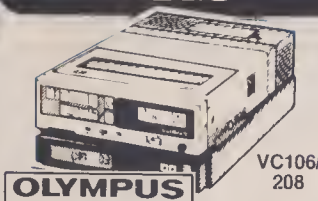
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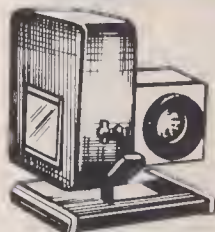


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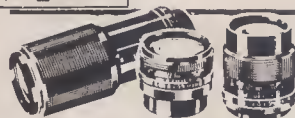
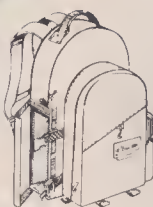
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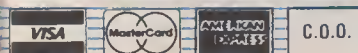
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Videotests

receiver. Below these are audio and video jacks for selected output, and they may be used to feed the system selection to a non-Dimensia VCR for recording or to feed a second monitoring system. In the lower right corner are the jacks to a Dimensia audio amplifier, with a control jack to relay commands.

The remote control looks much like the Digital Command Center that RCA featured with earlier system designs. This one is all black. The right side is identical with the previous model, but on the left side is a button for one extra input (Aux) in the top row, and another row of buttons is added right below the top row for the audio components—AM/FM, Phono, Tape, and CD. The other buttons on the right side are a combination of all the controls you would need to operate the RCA VCR, and there are some leftovers from RCA's SJT400 CED player, which is no longer manufactured. (Of course RCA is reluctant to talk about CED, but if you connect that player to the Vid 2 input, it may be operated by the same remote.) One renegade button on that side is the Audio B button for switching SAP on or off. It is one of the few things we would change—it should be with the tuner controls on the right side of the remote instead of on the left.

On the right side of the remote are a 10-key pad for tuning plus up/down scan tuning buttons, up/down volume control, mute, and a button that recalls the previously selected channel. Also on that side are a power-off button that turns the monitor off with one push and turns the whole system off with two pushes. One button cycles through the RF inputs and another turns on the status display, and lets you modify the on-screen displays between being set off in blocks of black, or with edged letters.

Operation. We don't even know where to start describing a system that offers an instruction manual in a 1-1/2-inch looseleaf binder backed up by a 2-hour videocassette. Funny thing, though: if you can follow the manual to get the components hooked up, the darn thing is "smart" enough on its own that you can almost throw away the manual.

Performance. The video specifications exceeded the capability of our test generator. The monitor/receiver is rated for 500-line horizontal resolution (6.2MHz bandpass), but we were able to check it only up to above 400 lines (5.2MHz). On video signal-to-noise ratio RCA doesn't quote a specification, but we measured 52dB at the green gun of the CRT with the signal on the Video 2 input. We didn't measure color noise. The range of the Color and Tint controls was quite wide, and the Auto Color switch maintained the selections we made through the widest range of picture signals we could supply.

We made audio measurements at both

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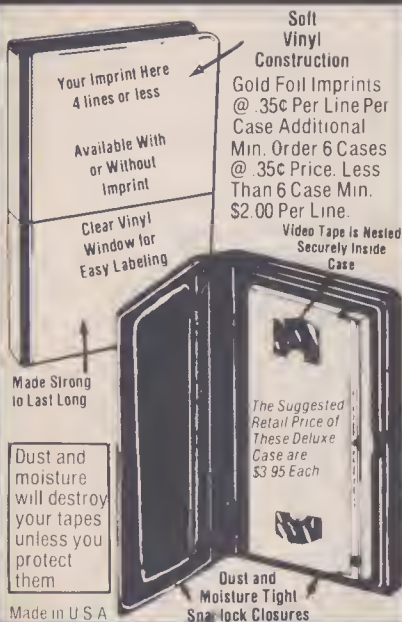
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Videotests

Test Report:

RCA FKC2600 'Dimensia' Monitor/Receiver

DATA

Date of test: December 1984

Suggested retail price: \$1300

Weight: 100 pounds approx.

Dimensions: 21-3/4 x 25-1/4 x 18-11/16 inches (h/w/d)

Power requirements: 120VAC, 60Hz, 134W average, 157W max.

Screen size: 26 inches, measured diagonally

Speaker size: one 5-inch woofer and one 2-inch tweeter on each side for stereo

Remote Control System

Transmission system: digitally encoded infrared light

Circuitry: Microprocessor controlled, on-board memory

Batteries: Four AA size, 1.5-volt cells

Battery life: One year in normal use

RF Specifications

Tuning system type: Multiband frequency synthesis

Band coverage: VHF channels 2-6, 7-13, midband channels (A-5)-1, superband channels J-W, hyperband channels (AA)-(QQ), UHF channels 14-83

Frequency coverage: 54-402 MHz, 470-890 MHz

Tuner type: Solid state

Channel access: Direct access keyboard, programmable Scan Up/Down

Channel indication: On-screen

Antenna inputs: Three 75-ohm VHF inputs, 75-ohm UHF input

Sensitivity: 1.14 pW, VHF; 3.0 pW, UHF

Off-set channel pull-in range: +/-3 MHz, cable; +2.5 MHz, -3.5 MHz, off-the-air (single channel)

Video Specifications

Luminance bandwidth: 4.2 MHz (limit)

Black-to-white rise time: 54.0 ns (RF in max. peaking)

Luminance resolution: Greater than 350 lines

the audio output terminals and speaker terminals. At the audio output terminals the unit delivered the full audio spectrum within 2dB from signals injected at the Vid 2 input. The results were more modest at the speaker terminals, where the range was restricted to 50-15,000 Hertz. Without BTSC generators we could verify broadcast stereo-TV performance by tuning in WNBC, New York. There we could verify signal content on stereo between 50 and 15,000 Hertz, but without test signals we could not verify flatness or channel separation, and instantaneous readings on S/N were in the 55dB range. SAP reception of the radio station currently supplied on that channel gave the more limited 50-12,000 Hertz range of that channel with a little more hiss, 52dB.

Conclusion. But forget the system for a minute. The FKC2600 monitor/receiver is a state-of-the-art video display with provision for all the video/audio-related de-

Chromo bandwidth: 1 axis, 500 kHz
Video input: 1 V, P.P., 75 ohms; negative sync
Video output: 1 V, P.P.; 75 ohms; negative sync

RGB Specifications

Resolution: 500 lines, minimum

Bandwidth: 6.2 MHz

RGB/Enable: TTL compatible; Hi (color on) = min. 2.4 V (no current required as Monitor has internal 3.65 V pull-up voltage through 75 ohm resistor; Lo (color off) = less than 1.5 V; less than 50 ohms impedance; able to draw minimum 30 max.

Sync: 0.25 V to 1 V P.P.; negative polarity

Audio Specifications

Frequency response: 50-15,000 Hz

Stereo performance: BTSC system, three channels (L, R, Audio-B)

Stereo/mono switching: automatic

Audio input: 680mV +/- 280 mV RMS

Audio input impedance: 16k ohms

Audio output: selected out: 400 mV

RMS @ 600 ohms.; system audio: 400

mV RMS @ 600 ohms.; to Hi-Fi: 1.5 V

RMS @ 600 ohms (maximum, volume

controlled)

Speaker types: two 5-inch high compliance woofers, two 2-inch tweeters

Speaker impedance: Internal, 16 ohms

(nominal); external, 6 ohms or greater

RESULTS & RATINGS

Horizontal resolution: 500 lines, see text

Video S/N (luminance): 53dB

Color: wide range with auto color, stable

Overall picture quality: excellent

Audio frequency response: 20-20,000

Hz +/- 2dB, to audio amplifier jacks; 50-

12,000 Hz, speaker terminals

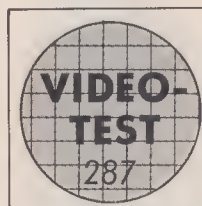
Audio quality: excellent, see text

Ease of operation: excellent

Overall performance: excellent

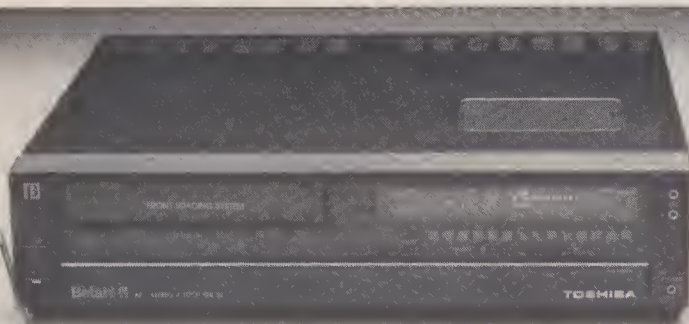
VICES we can presently envision, including computers and teletext decoders. It offers an excellent picture. Add all the other features and capabilities we've mentioned and you have an audio/video system in a class by itself.

Toshiba Beta Hi-Fi VCR



In October 1983 we reviewed Toshiba's first Beta Hi-Fi VCR, the V-S36, and liked it—but we made some suggestions on how it could be improved.

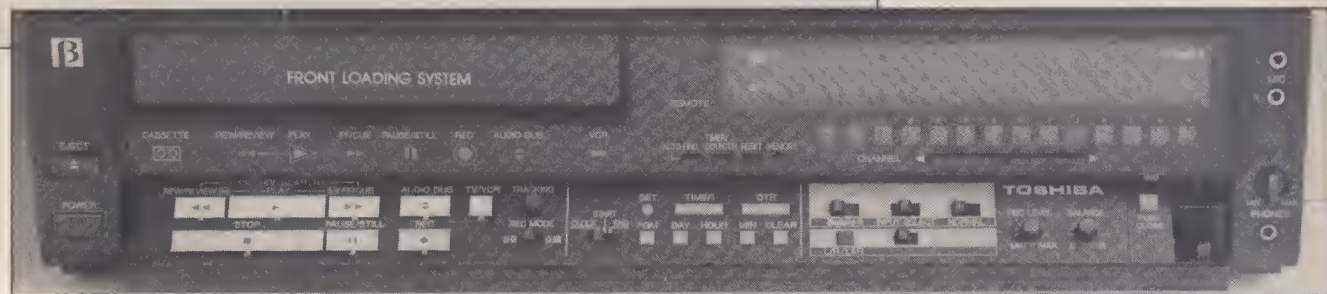
Toshiba didn't make all the improvements we suggested, but went us one better. It offers the V-S443 with some of those im-



improvements at a suggested retail price of \$849—\$250 cheaper than the previous model.

The V-S443 does let you control the audio input level manually, but instead of the usual single control for each channel, it offers a single recording-level control as

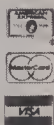
The V-S443 has an uncluttered look—most of its controls are hidden in a flip-down panel that's angled for ease of operation.



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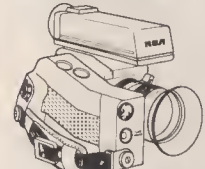
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Videotests

well as a balance control. Purists that we are, we were about to quibble about that but then we tried Toshiba's choice and found it easier to operate. We remember the same arguments back in the late 1950s when stereo came to audio, and you know how that was decided—just look at almost every piece of audio equipment manufactured today. Stereo Level and Balance won. The reason is simple: If you set the balance correctly at the start, you have only one control to worry about, and using that is a lot easier than having to work two controls at the same time to maintain both level and balance. A few TV/monitor manufacturers already use the technique.

The other suggestion adopted is a Volume control for the headphone output. On that Toshiba is a follower: Sony introduced the feature on its SL-2700 in 1983. Toshiba also follows Sony's 2700 lead in putting the hidden controls on the sloping face of a swing-down panel. This is an improvement. The designers also added front-panel source switching, so you won't have to remove the audio and video input cables to record TV programs, and that switch now has an A/V position. In the A/V position it provides simulcast-recording capability—and since there is an MPX jack to feed a BTSC stereo decoder, you'll be able to record broadcast stereo TV programs by adding an external decoder.

If those were the only changes made, the V-S443 would be a big step ahead of the earlier model. However, Toshiba had to give up something to get the price \$250 lower. It gave up some programmability on the timer, which now has only four program memories instead of eight, and stepped down to a 14-preset varactor tuner in lieu of the random-access frequency-synthesis one used on the V-S36. The designers didn't take us up on the loop-through RF input that lets you interface more easily with a cable system supplying scrambled channels. If that's all you have to give up to save \$250 and get all the new features, it may be a hidden bargain.

Description. The improvements have not been only in the features. Appearance too has changed—for the better. The unit is lower, sleeker, and it's black accented with gold for a stylish high-tech look. It is 4.1 inches high by 16.5 wide by 14.5 deep and weighs just 22.5 pounds. Because the unit is black, it appears even slimmer.

But for a few details at the extreme right and left, the front panel is organized in three rows. In the top row is the cassette hatch on the left, the remote-control sensor, and a large display area with tuner, clock/timer, and audio information. The middle row has indicators just below the cassette hatch, with a few counter function buttons in the center, and channel display plus up/down scan-tuning buttons on the right. The counter functions are a clock/counter pushbutton selector, counter reset, memory on/off, and auto find. In a

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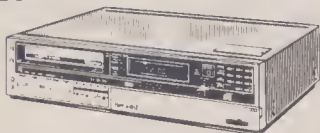
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Videotests

Test Report:

Toshiba V-S443 Beta Hi-Fi VCR

DATA

Date of test: December 1984

Suggested retail price: \$849.95

Weight: 22.5 pounds

Dimensions: 4.1 x 16.5 x 14.5 inches (h/w/d)

Power requirements: 120VAC, 60Hz, 44W (max.), 12W (standby)

Tape format: Beta

Tape speeds: Beta II, III

Play speed select: automatic

Still frame: yes

Frame advance: yes, by quick touch of Play while in still mode

Slow motion: 1/8X by holding down Play while in still mode

Speed play: no

Rapid search: see Cue & review

Cue & review: 8X using Fast Forward and Rewind (see text)

Visible FF and Rew: no

Fast forward/rewind time: 2-3/4 minutes for L-500

Remote pause: yes

Remote: 11-function IR wireless remote—Power, VCR/TV, channel Up/Down, Record (2 buttons), Rewind/Review, Play, Fast Forward/Cue, Pause/Still, Stop

Separate eject: yes

Counter digits: 4

Counter memory: yes

Program start locator/index/cue: yes (see text)

Audio dub: yes

Video dub: no

Auto rewind: yes

Stereo: in Hi-Fi mode only

Hi-Fi: yes

Tuning method: 14 preset, varactor-type

Channel selectors: up/down scan on both VCR and remote

Preset method: rotary switch and thumbwheel (adjustment tool supplied)

Cable readiness: 117 channels—2 to 6, A2, A1, A to I, 7 to 13, 14 to 83, J to W, AA to JJ

AFT: switchable

Channel lock: yes

Timer: 4 event, including daily or weekly

Auto channel-change: yes

Accessories: remote control with batteries, cassette, stereo audio cable, channel-number sheet

RESULTS & RATINGS

Horizontal resolution: 250 lines

S/N, video luminance: 42dB, un-

weighted; 48.5dB, weighted

S/N, chroma AM: 45.6dB

S/N, chroma PM: 41.9dB

Audio frequency response: 20-20,000Hz, +0.2, -2.3dB, Hi-Fi; 50-8000Hz, -4dB, Beta II, linear; 50-6300Hz, -5dB, Beta III, linear

Dynamic range: 82dB, Hi-Fi

S/N, audio: 44dB, linear

Audio distortion: 0.25%, Hi-Fi; 2.6%, linear

Overall picture quality: good/very good

Audio quality: excellent, Hi-Fi; average, linear

Ease of operation: very good

Overall performance: very good

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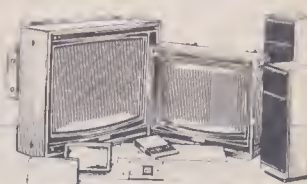
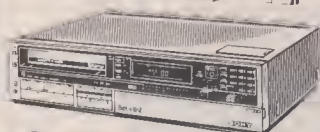
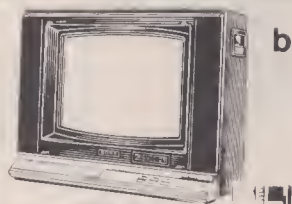
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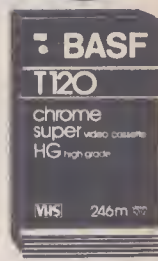
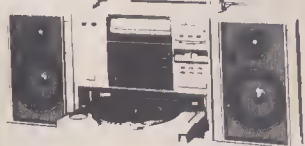
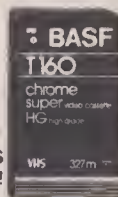
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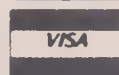
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Videotests

narrow column at the left are the Beta logo, the Eject button, and the Power switch. In a matching column at the far right are the left and right microphone jacks, the volume control for the headphones, and the headphone jack.

The bottom row of the front panel does seem bare except for the Beta Hi-Fi label and the Toshiba logo—until you notice the tiny sign in the upper left of the area that says "Push Open." Push it and that portion of the front panel swings down to reveal most of the controls. They are on a panel

that slopes forward so you can see what you're doing even if the VCR is on a shelf below eye level. At the left end of the panel are the normal tape-transport controls, organized in two rows like everything else on this panel. In the top row are buttons for Rewind/Reverse Search, Play, Fast Forward/Forward Search, and Audio Dub. Below those are Stop, Pause/Still, and Record. These are silver, as is the TV/VCR button to their immediate right in the top row. Just a little farther right is the tracking control, above the Beta II/III Re-

cord Speed Selector. A gold line separates these controls from others in the compartment.

Between that line and another farther right are the clock and timer setting controls plus the OTR (One Touch Record) button. That lets you record a variety of timed segments with a minimum of effort. So far all the controls on this hidden panel have been on a black background. To the right of the controls mentioned so far are three slide switches and a button against a blue background. They let you select various audio and video combinations as well as which audio sources are played or recorded and whether the recording level of the Beta Hi-Fi tracks will be adjusted automatically, manually, or not recorded at all. Whatever input source is selected is always recorded on the linear track. In a small black area to the right of these controls are the manual Beta Hi-Fi Level and Balance controls. At the extreme right of the panel is a release that lets you close the panel, which is locked into position when it is fully open.

The sides and bottom are bare except for air holes, but the top has the tuning-preset compartment in addition to the holes near its rear. The compartment has the familiar thumbwheels for selecting channels, but instead of the more common slide switch for selecting the band, this one uses rotary switches. A tool housed in the compartment makes turning the band switch easy. Also in the compartment is the AFT switch.

The rear panel is uncluttered. There are the usual VHF and UHF inputs and outputs. The video and stereo inputs and outputs are standard too, as is the camera remote-pause jack—but there is an additional MPX jack to feed a MTS stereo/SAP decoder. It lets you add that capability when broadcast TV stereo comes to your area. The other rear-panel occupants are the Channel 3/4 RF output selector, power cord, and an accessory AC outlet.

The remote control, which operates on two AA cells, is quite simple. Its 11 buttons let you turn the VCR on or off, as well as change the channel up or down and select TV or VCR output. The remaining buttons let you record, play, search, fast forward, rewind, pause/still, slow-play, or stop the VCR.

Operation. The labeling of the various controls is so clear that you almost don't need an instruction manual. All you have to do is consider the options and choose one. You may even be able to use the Auto-Find option by just trying it. The VCR puts down a marker that it recognizes every time you go into recording mode, except when coming out of pause, and it stops at the next marker in auto-find mode. The only thing that may prompt second thoughts is the tuning: it's only the up/down scan type on both the VCR and the remote. The 14-preset limit may be a restriction if you have cable service and



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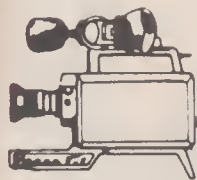
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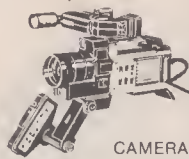
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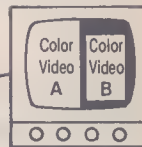
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Use optional AWP-15 VIEWFINDER with VIS-4, mounted together on the accessory shoe of one of the cameras. This camera becomes a Master Control Station operable in all ambient light conditions INCLUDING SUNLIGHT.

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- B - Selects Camera B video and Audio(s) at Output

NORMAL - Selects a Special Effect at Output. See FADE/WIPE switch for description of FADE mode. In WIPE mode, the wipe pattern is as the symbol on each cartridge. The wipe sweeps the entire screen from cameras A to B when the EFFECT CONTROL lever moves from side to side. The lever can be stopped at any position, for "Split Screens." Each symbol shows the wipe with the EFFECT CONTROL centered. In NORMAL mode, the white part of the symbol corresponds to Camera A and the black part to Camera B. Audio volume at the output dissolves from Camera A audios to Camera B audios following the video wipe. In the center of the EFFECT CONTROL travel, audio from both cameras are 100% mixed, retaining the Left and Right stereo separation.

REVERSE - Reverses the screen position of video A and B in relation with a NORMAL effect. The black part of the wipe symbol represents Camera A, and the white part Camera B. Audio mixing is also reversed to follow video.



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Weight 2 pounds

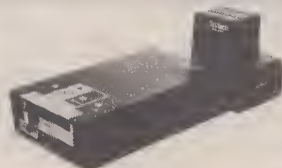
EFFECT CONTROL Lever and FADE/WIPE Switch

FADE Mode: When the Control Lever is moved from side to side, video and audio "dissolves" from Camera A, to BOTH cameras superimposed (at the center of the travel), to Camera B.

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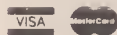
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Videotests

plan to record more than 14 of those channels. Otherwise operating the V-S443 is a snap. The instruction manual has most of the information you need, but as with most manuals, it is not easy to find the answer you want since there isn't a detailed index. But Toshiba's summary sheet does cover most common situations.

Performance. Though the S443 is not the top of the line, it still offers very good performance. Its Hi-Fi audio is as good as on other Hi-Fis we've tested. In fact, we have found little variation between the var-

ious Hi-Fi machines in Hi-Fi mode. Frequency response is 20-20,000Hz within 3dB, with an 82dB dynamic range and less than 0.3 percent harmonic distortion. The linear audio is less spectacular—it's just average, with a frequency response of 50-8000Hz, -4dB (Beta II) and 50-6300Hz, -5dB (Beta III). Linear audio S/N is a modest 44dB, and THD is 2.6 percent.

Picture quality is somewhat better, with a horizontal resolution of 250 lines and an unweighted video S/N of 42dB. Color reproduction is average. So video is good

to very good.

Conclusion. With a good/very good picture and such good Hi-Fi sound at \$849.95 suggested retail, the V-S443 is a steal—especially since few retailers sell VCRs anywhere near the suggested retail price. So if the linear-track audio performance is not a major factor and you can live with the few compromises Toshiba made to keep the price down, consider this model.

Multiplex Upconverter/ Combiner



Even if you aren't a big video buff with lots of equipment, chances are you occasionally wish you could insert another video source into your antenna

or cable system so you wouldn't have to bother with switchers and remembering how to set them. Now you can insert video sources onto any unused UHF channel thanks to a gadget called the ChannelPlus, sold by Multiplex Technologies of Fullerton, California.

ChannelPlus lets you add channels to an existing set of signals supplied from antenna or cable—but with a few restrictions. The added channels can be put only into the UHF region; for best results you should put them between Channels 20 and 40, and they should be separated from already-used channels by at least one blank channel. A few years back there was another gadget called ChannelPlus that let you insert a signal on Channel 3 or 4 in the VHF band. We remember mixed results. Because either Channel 2 or 4 is used in most major markets, you were forced to splice in the new signal right next to an existing channel and the results were plagued by adjacent-channel interference. With this product you have all of the existing UHF to find a channel with at least one blank channel on either side—that is, a space with at least three consecutive blank channels. Then you can put your signal on the middle one of the three. Multiplex Technology suggests that you not use Channels 14 to 20 because of interference.

ChannelPlus is not a single product but a family of six products. They fall into two categories of three each. Within each category is a model that lets you add just one channel, one that lets you add one or two channels at a time, and one that lets you add up to three channels at a time. One category lets you add any sources that have VHF RF outputs on Channel 3 or 4. The second category accepts video/stereo sources without having to use an RF modulator to put them on Channels 3 or 4, only to have that translated to a higher UHF

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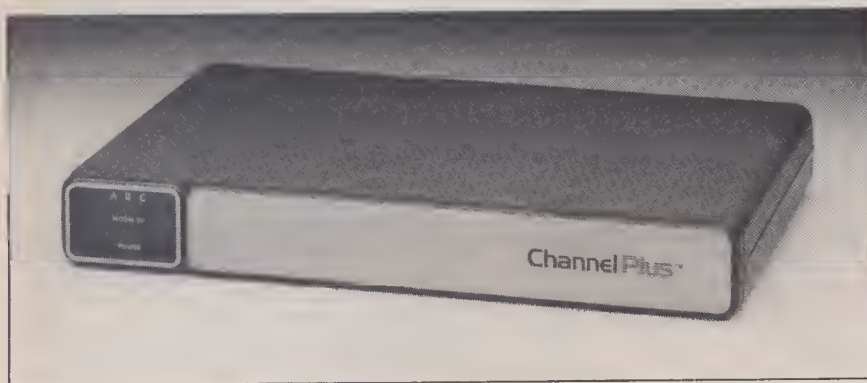
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frequency. The really good news is that if you have more than three sources you can daisychain ChannelPlus boxes to add as many channels as you have space for. That is not an unlimited number of boxes, though, because each box decreases the signal strength of the channels on the antenna/cable input by about 3dB (half its original strength).

Yet adding six or nine new channels is reasonable if you start out with strong signals from the antenna or cable supply. All model numbers start with "H." The ones that accept RF input end with "R," and those that accept video/audio input end with "V." Between those letters is a numeral that tells you how many channels that model will insert. In the current line those numbers are 1, 2, or 3 in each series. The model we tested was an H3V, which adds up to three video/stereo sources. Another way to look at this model would be as an inexpensive way of converting a regular TV into a monitor/receiver. Note, however, that although the V-model boxes accept stereo audio, they combine the two sound channels, and the RF output carries only mono audio. That should be no surprise because stereo generators/modulators are difficult and costly to build—and that is one of the things slowing down the start of stereo TV broadcasting.

Description. All ChannelPlus boxes are the same size: 1.5 inches high by 10.7 wide by 7 deep. They weigh about 2-1/2 pounds and are housed in brown plastic with silver trim. There are no operating controls, so the front is bare except for a window at the panel's extreme left. In that window is a power indicator and—depending on the model—one, two, or three lettered indicators to let you know which inputs are active. If an input is inactive, maladjusted, or its output level is low, its corresponding light will flicker or go out.

There are setup controls, however, and to gain access to them the decorative front panel pops off completely. Behind it are thumbwheels and sliding indicators for each input. Each of these sets is a tuning unit that lets you select what channel that input will appear on. Each input may be placed on any inactive channel in the 14-83 UHF band. At the right side of this sub-panel is an adjustment screwdriver control to adjust output level.

The top, bottom, and sides of the unit are bare, and the rear panel is simple indeed. At the left end is the output of the ChannelPlus, an F-connector carrying both VHF and UHF signals. Next to that is another F-connector for the input from the antenna or cable service; it accepts both VHF and UHF input. At the far end is a 3.5mm jack for the external 12-volt power supply. Between these extremes are the inputs. These vary with the model. The one we tested had three groups of three RCA-type pin jacks. Each group has a single input surrounded by a painted box. On

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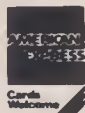
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our video/stereo-audio version, the left jack is for video and the other two for left and right audio inputs. On the RF version we did not test, these three jacks are replaced by a single F-connector to accept the Channel 3/4 output of the device being added. If you've been around video equipment before, you could guess how to use the unit without referring to the manual because that's all there is, and the jacks and controls are all clearly labeled.

Operation. There is little to tell with so few options. The restrictions tell almost

the whole story. One critical one relates to where in your current system you add the ChannelPlus. The antenna or cable input must be connected directly to the ChannelPlus' Antenna terminal before any splitters or other devices—except a signal amplifier, if one is used. (As we go along here we'll add our own comments to those in the instruction manual, which does not mention amplifiers or signal boosters, for example.) Then the signal coming from the ChannelPlus' Output may be split to feed all the TVs and other devices that need signal

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Test Report: ChunnelPlus Upconverter/Combiner By Multiplex Technology

DATA

Date of test: December 1984

Make and model: ChunnelPlus H3V; other models available, see text

Manufacturer: Multiplex Technology Inc., 251 Imperial Highway, Fullerton, Cal. 92635

Function: to convert video and stereo audio signals into a mono RF signal on a user-selectable UHF channel, and combine it with any group of antenna or cable signals as the middle channel of any unused three-channel group

Price: \$150

Dimensions: 1.5 x 10.75 x 7 inches (h/w/d exclusive of detachable power supply)

Weight: 2.5 pounds exclusive of power supply

Power requirements: 115VAC +/- 10%, 60Hz, 7W, external power supply (continuous operation—no power switch)

Case: brown plastic with silver trim

RF input: antenna or cable, F-connector

Video inputs: 3—line-level RCA-type pin connectors

Power supply connector: 3.5mm miniature phone type

Output: 1—RF input plus audio/video input signals upconverted to the UHF band

Setup controls: 3—thumbwheels with indicators for selecting channels to which three inputs will be inserted; 1—output level adjustment

Video bandwidth of each inserted channel: 6MHz, channel user-selectable for each video source

Insertion channel choices: UHF channels 14 to 60

RESULTS & RATINGS

Insertion loss, antenna/cable input: 3dB

Insertion loss, video inputs: 0dB

Isolation, video sources: 70dB, rated; 68dB, measured

Picture quality: video signal, very good at standard 1-volt; antenna/cable signal dependent on input signal grade and level

Ease of operation: excellent, but it may be hard to get setup correct on first try

Overall performance: good/very good

input, such as VCRs (not mentioned in the instructions). If it is being added to an existing system, simply disconnect the antenna/cable source input from the first splitter and connect it directly to the ChannelPlus; then connect the ChannelPlus to the splitter with a short cable you must supply. Then connect all the inputs you wish to add to the ChannelPlus—and last, plug in the power supply. There is no power switch, so the Power light goes on immediately.

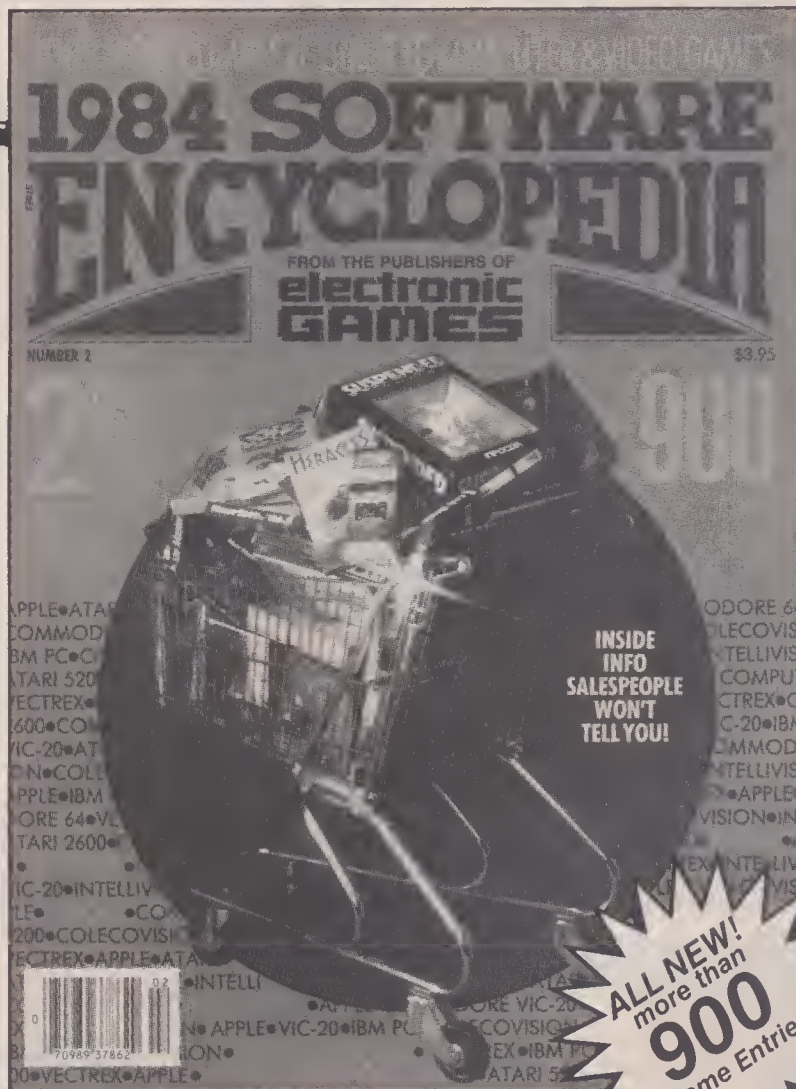
Turn on the main TV and various signal sources connected to the ChannelPlus. The source connected to Channel A will come up on Channel 25. If Channels 24, 25, or 26 are already in use, you will have interference. Then retune the ChannelPlus Channel A control on the front sub-panel to a channel not in conflict with an

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existing channel. Do the same for Channel B, which will show up on Channel 37, and Channel C, which will show up on Channel 47. You may try using Channels 14 to 20—but you're likely to get interference. You may go as high as Channel 60, but the channels near the top may be subject to interference or other problems.

The last task is to turn on all the TVs in your system and adjust the output level with a small screwdriver until all receive a good picture. If the level is too low, the pictures will be snowy; too high, and colors

will bleed. One other important note: All UHF connections to TVs and VCRs must be made. Remember, the added signals are in the UHF band. If you have a VHF and a UHF antenna with separate leads, those signals must be combined into a single signal with a combiner (available at most stores that sell video equipment). You'll also need to use VHF/UHF splitters at every TV and VCR having separate inputs. You won't have to worry about VCR outputs, though, because their signals will be injected into the whole system through the

ChannelPlus.

Performance. Since all ChannelPlus does is change the carrier frequency of the added signals, little signal degradation takes place in the box. Each input is isolated from other sources at around the 70dB the manufacturer specifies. We actually measured isolation between inputs at 48dB (an excellent result), but the difference may have stemmed from the proximity of the sources during the tests. We didn't do the tests in a Faraday cage, which would have eliminated those problems. (You won't be using the equipment in one, so you're likely to be operating under conditions that would duplicate our test.) Perhaps a bit more troublesome: you may have weak signals to start with. At levels over 150 microvolts, you won't notice the change in picture quality. Below that you may get a slight increase in noise. That noise is not really contributed by the box, which generates a miniscule amount. But weak signals through many feet of antenna cable will be degraded, and there is a 3dB insertion loss when signals are fed into the antenna terminals. There is no insertion loss for the inserted video signals.

Conclusion. With moderate or strong signals from an antenna or cable system, the ChannelPlus does make all of your video sources available at the same time. However, if you're using a cable-ready TV you may still have to walk over to the set to switch from the cable tuning sequence to the antenna tuning sequence, to get to the UHF band. A few TVs let you do this by remote control. The ChannelPlus works exactly as the manufacturer promises—but it will not solve every source-switching problem. For what it does, it deserves an overall rating of very good. At \$149.95, it's an inexpensive way of converting a regular TV into a monitor/receiver with three inputs. 

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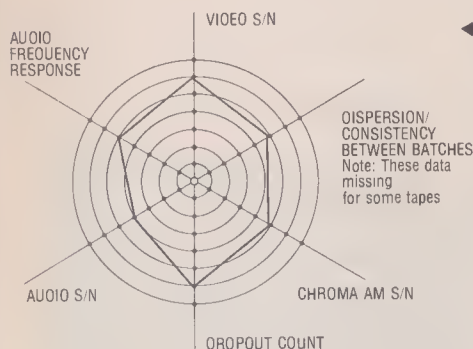
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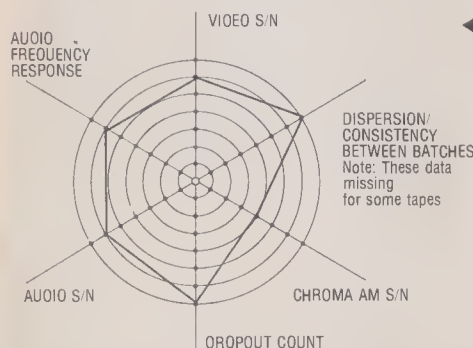
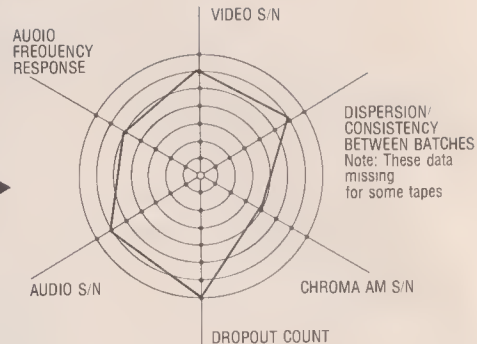


TDK High Standard L-750

Slightly better than standard, it earned two ratings of very good, two of good, and two of average. We had just two samples of the same batch—no consistency rating.

TDK Extra High Grade L-750 ▶

It earned a rating of excellent on dropout count, three very goods, one good, and two average.

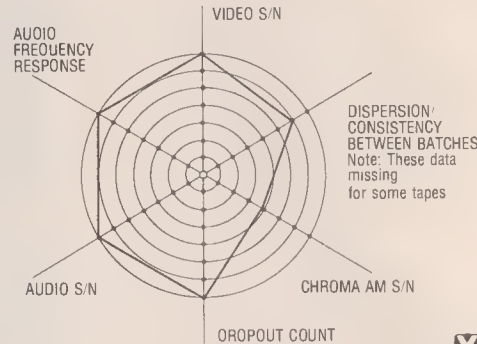


TDK Hi-Fi L-750

In the top five, this one was excellent on dropouts and consistency, very good in three areas, good in another, and average on chroma AM S/N.

TDK HDpro L-750 ▶

In the top five, it was excellent in four categories, good on another, and average on two others: chroma AM and PM S/N.



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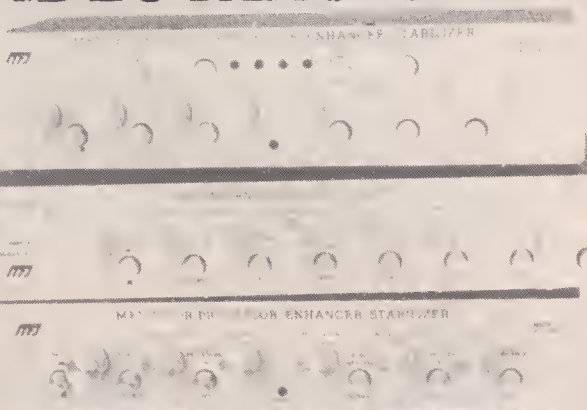
Second, it's a state-of-the-art enhancer/stabilizer with **Automatic Stabilizer** control, **Split-Screen Enhancer** (light and normal modes) and **Noise Cancel** control.

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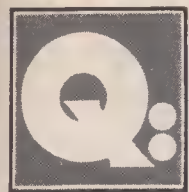
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Character

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Commentaries

Text can comment on the image, and so provide a counterpoint to what is seen. If you know what will happen in front of your camera, you can prepare text comments in advance. My daughter, age six, is a snappy dresser; she overdresses for almost any occasion. When we visited the grandmother who is the source of much of her wardrobe, I knew what she was going to

wear and prepared a script. She appeared on the screen with the line, "Amanda B. wearing a floor-length blue satin party dress with white lace trim. . ."

Text is an adjunct to how-to tapes. You can list the materials and reiterate the steps. For cooking tapes, a list of the ingredients can be shown at the start of the tape.

The text can also be the primary focus of a tape. For example, *Saturday Night Live* did a sketch in which one of the characters sang an operatic aria. As he sang, a title roll came over the screen explaining that the producers didn't think he was any good

either, but that they had to let him sing this song or he wouldn't cooperate in a much better sketch that was coming up next.

Poetry originated as a spoken form, and now it's primarily a print form. It can also be published as a video form. Load the poem in the character generator a few lines per page, then select music or ambient sounds to suggest the mood of the poem, and a background visual that enhances the text. You end up with a poem published as videotext; it is read, but also benefits from other visual and aural stimuli. Purists may blanch at the thought, but the means of doing such experiments didn't even exist a few years ago. Maybe people deeply committed to oral poetry felt similarly threatened by the printing press.


Lay It Out

There is an art to placing text on the screen. The words have to be nicely spaced in a typographic sense. That means selecting the right-size type for the density of the message. A cogent one-word title should be big; a long title may take more than one line and the break has to come at a spot that contributes to legibility.

Not everything belongs in the center of the screen, nor do all words have to be arranged in columns. The main title can be placed in the upper-left screen and a subtitle across the bottom. You can experiment with different layouts. The object is to make the mass of the text fall across the screen as a good composition in its own right. The eye needs to be led and coaxed to read it.

One quick way to experiment with off-center layouts is to use graph paper. The number of lines and characters per line is set by the camera, so you can print one letter for each square on the graph. Once you have done it on paper, it becomes easier to do it on the screen.

The image underneath the text must also be considered, since the effect on the screen is a balance of the two. When introducing a person, for example, open with a full-profile shot looking to the right. The face takes up the left half of the screen, and the name can be placed on the right side, a little lower than middle-screen. This is a much stronger overall composition than a full-on face with the name centered on the low edge of the screen.

Words and images engage different parts of the mind; text appeals to thought and pictures to feelings. When you put the written word on a TV screen it competes with the purely visual imagery. Attention is divided between experiencing and analyzing. You immediately put the audience into a more cognitive, thinking relation to the screen. That can be disconcerting to a viewer. Video is a passive medium, and your audience may unconsciously resent being made to think. But used judiciously, text on the video screen will provoke rather than irritate. That is what makes character generators such an exciting new tool on consumer-grade cameras. 

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Have trouble finding copies of VIDEO at your local newsstand? Want to know where to send a friend to pick up a copy? The following will help—it's a list of retail stores across the country, plus Canada and Puerto Rico, that carry at least 20 copies of VIDEO every month.

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Pharaoh Shop, Arab
Electronics Today, Jacksonville
Video Village, Mobile

ARIZONA

Niles Radio & TV, Tucson

ARKANSAS

Entertainment World, Fort Smith
National Video, North Little Rock
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CALIFORNIA

Ray's Video Showcase, Alameda
Video Station, Alameda
Video Cross Roads, Anaheim
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C & W Video, Camarillo
Video Place, Campbell
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Belreid Inc., Citrus Heights
Video Connection, Citrus Heights
Video Outlet, Concord
Family Video Centers Inc., Covina
Active Video, Cupertino
Video Station, Diamond Bar
El Cerrito Home Video, El Cerrito
Movies To Go, Fremont
Coast Video, Fountain Valley
Hi-Desert Home Video, Hesperia
Picture Show, Huntington Beach
Video Warehouse, Huntington Beach
Video Etc. of Irvine, Irvine
Video Gallery, La Jolla
Video Station, Laguna Hills
Back Stage Video, Long Beach
KK Sight & Sound, Los Angeles
Video Archives, Mangattan Beach
Clark Cable Home Video, Millbrae
Moving Pictures Video, Montebello
Video Plus, Novato
Video Room Inc., Oakland
Video Depot, Pasadena
Video Outpost, Placentia
Video Biz of Canyon Crest, Riverside
Video Mart Inc., San Bernardino
Peninsula Home Video, San Carlos
Mr. Video, San Diego
Video of San Diego, San Diego
Video Rentals, San Diego
Hois Home Video, San Francisco
Home Video, San Francisco
Video Marine Laserdisc HD, San Francisco
Videoland, San Francisco
Video Station, San Jose
Discount Video Movies, Santa Clara
Moviola Video Center, Santa Clara
Lott's Home Entertainment Ctr., Santa Cruz
Home Movies To Go, Santa Maria
Video Station, Santa Monica
Video Box Office, Scotts Valley
Video Terminal, South Pasadena
Popcorn Video Co., Vacaville
R.J.'s Video, Vacaville
Home Video Movies, Ventura
Video Mania, Westchester
Video Station, Whittier

COLORADO

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21st Century Video, Oenver
Video Country, Oenver
Video Land, Denver
Show-Biz Video, Fort Collins
Home Entertainment Video, Lakewood
National Video, Loveland
Video Visions, Northglenn

CONNECTICUT

Robard's Video, Branford
Channel I Video, Bridgeport
Video Connection, Bridgeport
Video Movies of Brookfield, Brookfield
Valley Video I, Naugatuck
Nostalgia World, North Haven
Photo Video, Stamford

DELAWARE

Video Zone, Bethesda
Video Box, Frederick
Towne Video, Rehoboth Beach
Video Station, Wilmington

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

National Video, Washington
Video Biz, Washington
Video Channel, Washington
Video Connection, Washington

FLORIDA

Video Biz, Altamonte Springs
Video Movies Etc., Altamonte Springs
Video Show/Pik A Flick, Clearwater
Deland Video Movie Ctr., Deland
Fort Myers Video Movie Center, Fort Myers
Everything Video, Hollywood
Home Video Center, Jacksonville
National Home Video Inc., Kissimmee
National Video, Lakeland
Video Connection, Largo

Video Classics, Margate
Video Galore, Mary Esther
The Crossings Video Shop Inc., Miami
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Video Movie Center, Orange Park
Ace Video Entertainment, Orlando
Video Video, Pensacola
Video Station, Riviera Beach
Video Biz, St. Petersburg
Video Corner, St. Petersburg
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Everything Video, Tallahassee
Today's Video, Temple Terrace
TVC Enterprises, Tequesta
Video Galore, Valparaiso

GEORGIA

American Tape & Video, Chamblee
Carper Video One Stop, Cumming
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Home Video, Norcross
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Movie World, Warner Robins
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HAWAII

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ILLINOIS

BAC Theatres Inc., Belleville
Video Video - Saw Mart, Belleville
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Good Vibes Sound, Champaign
Appltime Video, Chicago
Countryside Home Video, Countryside
Video Revue, Decatur
Algonquin Records, Oes Plaines
Video Show, Oes Plaines
Keepsake Video, Dolton
Pro Visual, Dolton
Captain Video, Dundee
Home Video Co. of Elmhurst, Elmhurst
Circle Communications, Forest Park
All Video, Homewood
Video Basics Inc., Joliet
Video Merchant II, Lombard
Video Rangers Inc., Morton Grove
State Electronic, Mount Prospect
Classic Video, Oak Lawn
Video Alternatives, Palatine
Blackhawk Films, Rock Island
Hollywood Video, Sandwich
Video To Go, Schaumburg
Showbiz Video, Springfield
Westchester Video, Westchester
Video Vault, Westmont
Video Hotline, Winnetka
Georgetown Video, Woodale

INDIANA

Video Vision, Bedford
Mr. Video, Franklin
Mr. Video East, Indianapolis
Mr. Video #1, Indianapolis
Merrillville Video, Merrillville
Video Biz, Portage
Kemble Auto Service, South Bend
Von's Video, West Lafayette

IOWA

Video Exchange, Clive
Blackhawk Films, Oavenport
Video Island Ltd., Oavenport
Ray's Video Exchange, Oes Moines
Video Biz of Des Moines, Des Moines
Video Land USA, Iowa City
National Video, Sioux City
National Video, West Des Moines

KANSAS

Video Biz, Lenexa
Duncan's Movie Magic, Topeka

KENTUCKY

Channel 4, Canton
Video Biz of Canton, Canton
Magic Castle Video, Columbus
Voyager II Video, Florence
Video Rentals, Henderson
Dayton Video, Kettering
Hancock's Home Video, Louisville
Video Prod. Home Movies, Richmond
National Video, Springfield

LOUISIANA

Video Disc Center, Gretna
Home Video of La Place, La Place
Video Biz, Maudeville

MAINE

Video Store, Auburn
Sound Trak, Sanford
Video Biz, South Portland

MARYLAND

Video Emporium, Baltimore
Video Explosion Inc., Baltimore
Columbia Video Ctr., Columbia
Prime Time Video, Frederick
Video Connection, Kensington

Marlow Video Club Inc., Marlow Heights
Video Odyssey, Parkville
Video Outlet, Silver Springs
Video Station, Silver Springs
Video Store, Silver Springs
Greetings & Readings, Towson

MASSACHUSETTS

Family Flicks Unlimited, Amesbury
Video Villa Inc., Arlington
Video Dimensions, Auburn
JT's Video Experience, Brockton
Video Connection, Burlington
Video Trek Inc., Burlington
Video House of Wareham, Buzzards Bay
Good Vibrations, Canton
Act 1 Video Inc., Oracut
Village Ex Photo & Video, Framington
Video Biz of Northshore, Gloucester
Video House Inc., Hadley
Prime Time Video Inc., Hanover
Ipswich Video Barn, Ipswich
Landmark Video World, Lowell
Video Exchange, Marlborough
Movies To Go, Newton
Video Biz, Newton Ctr.
Video Store, Peabody
Home Video Center, Plymouth
Video Paradise, Plymouth
Video Store Inc., Randolph
New Video Inc., Raynham
Video Connection, Saugas
Videoarama, Seekonk
Video Paradise, Westboro
Video Connection, Wore

MICHIGAN

Rainbow Video, Burton
Motor City Video Exchange, Dearborn
Video Connection, Farmington
Video Land, Farmington Hills
Video Today, Holland
Video Innovations, Kalamazoo
Lansing Video, Lansing
Video Connection #140, Madison Heights
Video USA, Madison Heights
Grove Video, Port Huron
Abbott Video Inc., Roseville
Thomas Video, Royal Oak
Hi-Tek Video, Southfield
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MINNESOTA

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Parkway Video & Electronic Mart, Brooklyn
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Video Clinic, Coram
Video Connection, Oelmar
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Video Connection DBA Fig Inc., East Northport
Video Quest, Elmont
Audio Video Barn, Flushing
Video Network Center, Flushing
Video Wizard Inc., Flushing
Video Joe, Forest Hills
Video Station, Forest Hills
Video Bug, Fredonia
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Video Connection, Merrick
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Video On The Move, Ridgewood
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Video Connection of RVC, Rockville Centre
Rocky Point Video Palace, Rocky Point
Video Entertainment, Sidney
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Giffen Video Corp., Staten Island
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Video Connection, Stow
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Video Vision, Buaynabo
Borg Warner, Carolina
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Video Center VHS, Pinar
Video Plaza III, Rio Piedras
Bayamon Video Concessions, San Juan
Mayaguez Video Concessions, San Juan
Pia Inc. Video Concessions, San Juan
Ponce Video Concessions, San Juan
Puerto Rico Video Concessions, San Juan

RHODE ISLAND

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Video Station, Cranston
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National Video, Middletown
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Video City, Providence
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SOUTH CAROLINA

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TENNESSEE

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Video Works Three, Dallas
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Video Station, Roanoke
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WASHINGTON

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Video Space Inc., Bellevue
Video Station, Bellevue
Video Department, Bellingham
Video Factory, Everett
City Lights Video, Issaquah
Captain Video, Seattle
Stardust Video, Tacoma

WEST VIRGINIA

Video Station, Huntington

WISCONSIN

Singleton Electronics, Fond Du Lac
Take One Video, Madison
Fast Video, Milwaukee
Little Buddha Enterprises, Milwaukee
Flicks & Pics Etc., Eugene

CANAOA

Major Video Inc., Portage Prairie
Video Stop, Vancouver

BERMUOA

Video Vision, Southampton

continued from page 80

Life's a Circus won an Emmy, though the story is without a satisfying dramatic ending. Snoopy falls in love with a surprisingly *chi-chi* looking French poodle and joins the circus to be near her, ending up a big top trapeze star. Charlie wonders if his dog will ever come home. A highlight scene has Snoopy creepily alone at night in a train

At presstime another twofor was scheduled for January release: *It's Your First Kiss, Charlie Brown*, paired with *Someday You'll Find Her, Charlie Brown*—just in time for Valentine's Day (even if this story isn't). And still more titles were announced for future release: the hour-long *It's an*

As for the Peanuts movies, they could easily be cut to an hour. Though the extra length allows for a little more emotion and drama, the impatient viewer might wish to keep the fast-forward switch handy.

And on a less profound note, happiness is a Charlie Brown videocassette.

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continued from page 85

☐ Does the client want an edited tape or raw footage? Does he want backup copies?

☐ Finally, do you *want* the job? You may find yourself sometimes accepting an assignment on the cheap for the sheer pleasure of it. You might even consider bartering your services in exchange for

something you need.

The absolute minimum you should charge is what it would cost you to rent equipment if your own gear unexpectedly broke down. As a benchmark, a typical wedding shoot in New York, edited, averages \$350 to \$500. Newspaper classifieds from around the country showed wedding prices as low as \$200, although virtually no ad specified the caliber of equipment.

The Right Stuff

The equipment you use enters into what you charge. Just how much do you need to invest?

"We started out with typical half-inch consumer equipment," says Ferguson. "Regular VHS and Beta VCRs are fine for most things. The industrial versions are more rugged and they're good for very exact editing, but the picture quality isn't any better to most people's eyes—if," he insists, "you have a real good camera. We invested in an expensive industrial video camera right off the bat." A \$1500 VCR/camera/lights setup is sufficient, he feels, for informal affairs, insurance records, and depositions. You may need about 10 times that, though, to put together even a basic system, including an editing console, for creating business and industrial tapes.

For most things in between, including the ever-popular weddings and Bar Mitzvahs, consider matching a top-of-the-line consumer portable VCR with an industrial Panasonic WV-3180/6X (\$1075) or WV-3890B (\$2495), one-tube Newvicon and Saticon cameras respectively. You may even want to go super-slick and pick up the new three-tube JVC BY-110U, relatively inexpensive at \$4280. There are a host of other popular models, of course.

Besides a camera, a portable VCR, and possibly a second VCR for dubbing/editing, the accessories you'll almost certainly require include:

- ☐ At least one high-quality omnidirectional microphone, and possibly a long-range "shotgun" mike for distant sounds and one or two clip-on lavalier mikes for interviewing.
- ☐ A trio, optimally, of photographic lights with stands and reflectors, for setting up the standard three-light arrangement shown in any photo manual.
- ☐ Spare batteries and a battery charger.
- ☐ Extra cables, extension cords and three-prong-to-two-prong converters, plus gaffer's tape to hold everything down and help prevent people from tripping over wires.
- ☐ Lens-cleaning tissues and a can of compressed air.
- ☐ An earphone or headphone to monitor sound.
- ☐ Plenty of blank tape.
- ☐ A small tool kit.
- ☐ A first-aid kit. You just never know.

"One time a dancer cut her foot," recalls Penny Ward. "The shoot could have been ruined, or at least badly delayed. Fortunately my assistant had bandages."

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Be sure to pack mental equipment too. In any kind of people business, you not only have to give clients what they want, but you have to make sure they *know* what they want.

Unfortunately, none of this will get you into the union. According to a spokesperson for the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees and Moving Picture Machine Operators, which presides over cinematographers and videographers, "Our jurisdiction is over theatrical and/or commercial productions, which include movies, TV commercials, industrial films, and rock videos. It doesn't include small-scale video shoots."

An out-of-home company in Florida sells videotaped rides on historic train lines. Another place specializes in tapes of model trains. Everything in between is up for grabs. Whether your *forte* is at the editing console or on a mobile video shoot, there could be gold in them thar skills. 

1/2" Millionaire

continued from page 85

was always beating the newspaper people to the scene. So I called some local papers."

Taylor finally started moving up from high-end consumer to low-end industrial equipment. "I remember when I got my Panasonic WV3900 camera and my first 3/4-inch portable deck."

With better-grade equipment Taylor was the only game in town—and his work for local hotels, TV, and newspapers insured that the right people knew it. When F&F Productions needed someone to shoot the Borg-vs.-Gerulaitis tennis match at the UFC Sun Dome for cablecast, Taylor got the job. And when a pal from the hotel business told him an official from the United Arab Emirates was taking bids for video productions in the Mideast, Taylor bid low and got that work too.

At which point Vincent Taylor was most definitely a professional video producer, waving fond farewell to the world of home video. "It's surreal. I've spent months taping in the Arab world. Would you believe ice shows? International championship dart contests? Arab soap operas?"

In-Focus' corporate forecast calls for sunny skies—and lots of them. The company grossed \$1 million in 1984, and projects \$6-10 million for 1985—because now there are negotiations with Cyndi Lauper and Lionel Richie and others for a whole series of Mideast concert tours, and a cable company for the Cayman Islands, and promotions for Showtime, and commercials for Florida politicians. As Taylor puts it, "Video—I guess you can't call it a hobby anymore when it starts paying the rent and the grocery bills."

—Richard Jaccoma

Rock Video

continued from page 92

were Merrill and Joe's offbeat little special effects, like me typing "Jimmie-Jimmie" and the words actually appearing on screen, and me banging my head against the pillow in time to beat. Also, when I pull out the guns, the image flips backward in a way that makes it look like the film accidentally got caught—an effect they got by tinkering with the equipment in ways that would probably be frowned upon by those other 19 top directors.

Every friend I have in New York—all four of them—make cameos in the video, and even though we knew we couldn't use a lot of footage of them, we shot a lot just to appease them for coming down and hanging out all day. When they saw the final cut, I don't think they were too appeased, but I reminded them it's all part of the glamour of show business.

I would do the whole thing differently now. I wouldn't rely on friends to add color. I'd wear flashier outfits. I'd be more alive in front of the camera. I'd use less lip-sync and more conceptual ideas. My eye wouldn't be suffocating from a lack of oxygen. But I'm proud of "Jimmie" because for \$300 we did what bands now spend thousands and thousands to attempt and only sometimes achieve—we made a fast-moving clip that conveys the spirit of the group and the song with a minimum of pretensions and clichés. Besides, when Merrill and Joe told me "Jimmie" would be included on *Danspak II*, their second Video EP for Sony, all reservations and regrets dissolved.

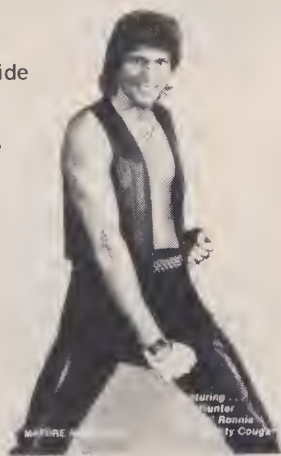
Dance Dance Dance

Danspak I was a successful sampling of their clips for New York innovators like Living, Shox Lumania, and Richard Bone. It was advertised on MTV, feted at parties, promoted by Howard Bloom's public-relations firm, and sold in stores all over the country. This time Sony would get even more exposure for it thanks to sales incentive programs, tie-ins, and heavier promotion. Though everyone in the world had a video by now, this meant ours might at least get seen somewhere. Rather than the great innovators we'd dreamed of being, we were now just grateful to belong.

Danspak II meant a chance to be seen and heard by people who'd never see us on MTV (the clip was deemed too low-budget for regular rotation, and even rejected by the Basement Tapes competition—maybe because it was too high-budget?). It meant the chance to have a big corporation behind us—a blissful idea after years of licking our own envelopes and labeling our own tapes—and to be in the same package with Jim Carroll and Lenny Kaye, both of whom I admired, and could prove it; I'd given them both good reviews throughout the years. In the back of my mind I also knew that *Danspak II* represented the dim, but quite

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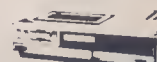
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possible, chance to make some money. Maybe even the \$300 I'd spent.

While I contemplated all these mindboggling delights, Merrill and Joe asked me to do a cameo on the last video in the package, by actor/singer Jason Harvey. This was my chance to reverse all the mistakes I'd made last time, to flaunt my newly matured video presence. Even though I was hardly the star of this one, I was determined to act like I was ("There are no small parts, only small people"). In a dance-hall scene filmed at New York's Cat Club, I was just one of the dancers in the crowd, but I was going to spin, swivel, toss, and turn until I showed the video world the genius that was only beginning to blossom on "Jimmie" and was now in dazzling full bloom. Bursting with energy and gold lame, I was nothing short of fabulous.

The next week I saw the final edit. There were two tiny glimpses of me way in the background and I missed one of them because I blinked. I guess he was jealous.

Shortly after that, Merrill and Joe went on a cable-TV show to talk about *Danspak II*. Asked what it was like to work with Michael Musto, they said, "He was witty and made us laugh, but he had serious ego problems." I guess they were jealous too. 

Tape Tests II

continued from page 99

for a specific application; e.g., the audio frequency response is of little importance if you want to capture the beauty of a flower. Have fun finding your dream tape.

Thanks

A test of many videotapes is a huge undertaking and we received help from many sources. First were the manufacturers, both management and engineering, who taught us about tape, its manufacture, and how to test its performance. Special thanks are due to BASF (both in West Germany and Bedford, Massachusetts), Memorex, PD Magnetics, and Sony, who took us through their plants for a firsthand look at manufacture and spent many hours teaching us the fine points of tape. Then there are the engineers from Fuji, JVC, Panasonic, Quasar, 3M (Scotch), and TDK, who—

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in addition to long meetings about tests and test procedures—were always available to answer our questions. And thanks to the many public-relations personnel, both with the manufacturers and their agencies, who helped us gather samples and get technical help when we needed it. To all of those hundreds we offer our heartfelt thanks. My personal thanks also goes to the VIDEO staff for their help and patience in putting it all together.

Drumroll

As usual, we haven't talked about price since that is so volatile and has little if any relationship to manufacturers' suggested retail prices. Yet to anyone without an unlimited supply of money, price does affect choice. For all practical purposes, if it costs too much it doesn't exist. However some tapes are better than others and in general higher grades perform better than lower ones.

The top performer's were Fuji SuperXG H351, Maxell HGX Gold, Sony Professional, and TDK HDpro. We intentionally listed them in alphabetical order because numerical ranking will change if you weight them differently. And appearance on the screen boils down to personal preference. What we think we've accomplished with all our testing is to let you form groups of equivalent tapes. Trust your own eyes and your VCR to determine which tapes in the same class best meet your expectations.

One last word—you may find your family and friends don't always agree with you on what tape is best for a specific purpose. You may not agree with us or they may not agree with us. You're not crazy. Ever have an argument with anyone about a suit and tie or dress and shoes that do not match? Well, with tape it's hard to find agreement on almost everything except dropout count and the presence of noise. The real question is how much of a weakness is too much. Every tape manufacturer has made so much improvement in the last two years that it's sometimes difficult to recall what it was like back then—dropout counts of over 150 large ones per minute, etc. Tape is better than it ever was, and cheaper too. You're sure to find a tape that both pleases you and doesn't drain your pocketbook.

Choose wisely. And happy taping. ☒

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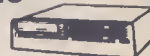
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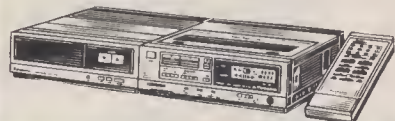
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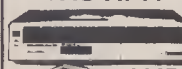
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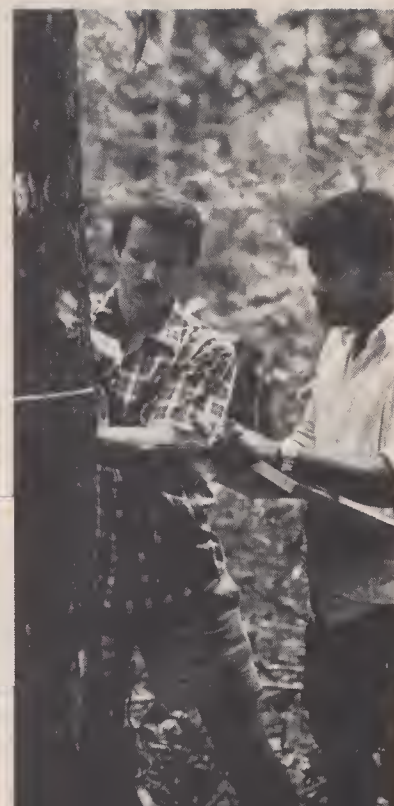
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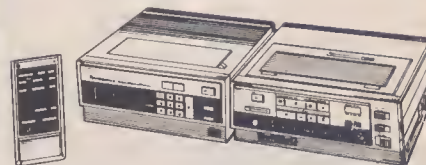
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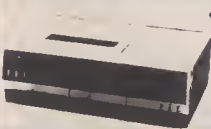
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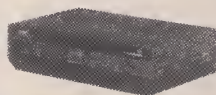


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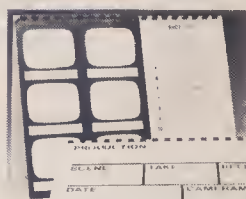
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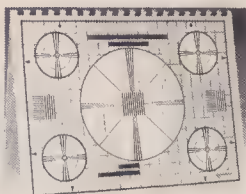
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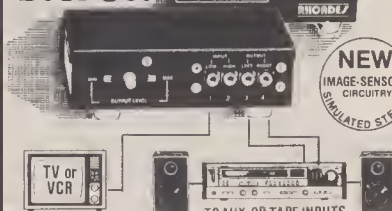
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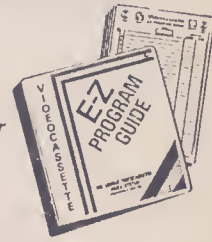
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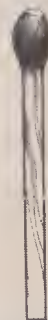
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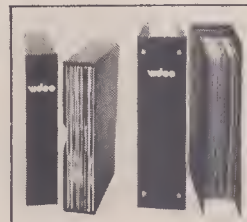
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Dateline Tokyo

Letter from Japan

by **Ichiro Kakehashi**

All Night Long

TOKYO—Saturday night fever strikes in Japan around midnight. Sometimes it gets a little tacky, even for those of us without much taste.

A case in point is the competition by most of Tokyo's five commercial channels to duplicate the ratings success on Fuji TV's *All Night Fuji*. The show has been on the air in Shinjuku for about a year and a half. It features young female college students who perform various skits and games and do interviews, and who are occasionally asked to do blushing reviews of clips from porno videocassettes. The show is live and apparently unrehearsed, from 12:45 a.m. into the wee hours early Sunday morning.

The young ladies, known collectively as the "All-Nighters," are selected from applicants attending several women's colleges and universities. They are obviously amateurs whose performance is loosely held together by a young and imaginative production staff.

Two of the competing shows, Asahi TV's *Midnight in Roppongi* (from 12:10 to 2 a.m.) and TV Tokyo's *Exciting Night* (from midnight to 1:20 a.m.), are based on the realization that Roppongi—an eclectic eating-dancing-drinking entertainment district of Tokyo, conveniently near Tokyo Tower and the studios of TV Asahi and TV Tokyo—is a big draw for the 18-to-34 set.

The competition doesn't try to copy the *All Night Fuji* formula directly. Instead,

they go more for the cheap shots and sleazy sex that either are missing or are simply passing moments for the All-Nighters. One show, *Kaizoku (Pirate) Channel* (from 11:55 p.m.), gives us interviews with young women who work the topless-bottomless bars and massage parlors. The interviews are interspersed with voiceovers of tapes of the girls at work. They conclude with the young guest being asked to remove her panties, which are then thumbtacked on a bulletin board in a week-by-week array.

A twist of the dial takes us to a series of how-to-do-it lessons by a bespectacled massage expert who looks more like a dentist, but who gives lessons on massaging a woman to climax—performed live onstage with his topless female assistant and audience participation.

I saw Ugly George, the gold-jumpsuited denizen of Manhattan's doorway porn video trade, at work in Tokyo several months ago. He said this was one of the least inhibited cities he's ever worked. And that was *before* the introduction of the late-night gynecology lessons.

Hosers

Lest you think it's all cheap thrills, however, some loftier programming will be available in April. That's when *Hoso University*, or "broadcast university," begins accepting its first 10,000 students for a learn-by-television degree-granting program that can be picked up by anyone within a 70-kilometer radius of Tokyo and an antenna that will pick up Channel 16.

You have probably read about the examination "hell" that is associated with college

and university entrance exams here in Japan. In addition to all that rote memorization and general cattle-car treatment, there is virtually no way a working adult can pursue a university degree here. That is why many welcome the TV method—although as you might expect, it was vastly oversubscribed as soon as its first-come-first-served enrollment opened.

Discorama

The disc derby continues. Sharp was first to offer a VHD/AHD videodisc player with the optional equipment to use VHD disks as the software medium for personal computers. Sharp's VP-2400 video/audio disc player was released in Japan with a suggested retail price of ¥149,800 (\$606.47, based on the going rate of ¥245 to \$1).

The interest in videodisc interfaces for personal computers was boosted in November when IBM Japan, the wholly owned subsidiary of the International Business Machines Corporation in the U.S., released its JX—a 16-bit personal computer based on an i8088 microprocessor. That prompted the Victor Company of Japan (JVC) to put together an interface adapter that will work with the new IBM PC as well as other personal computers.

It will be much like Sharp's VO-20PC, introduced last fall at ¥55,000 (\$222.67). The idea is that VHD/AHD components ought to be as versatile as the competing laser videodisc and Compact (digital audio) Disc equipment promoted by Pioneer and Sony.

The decoder has a 96dB dynamic audio range and fre-

quency response from 5Hz to 20kHz, making it competitive with laser-based Compact Disc players. Harmonic distortion is 0.002 percent at 1kHz. The mode selection can be switched for either the analog VHD or digital AHD programmed disk, with random access for either. The digital image decoder provides wipe-insert overlays of analog signals from video cameras or videodisc players over images generated from the AHD media.

Pixel Jockeys

The digital-TV horserace now has entries from Sony. One of the top-end models, the 27-inch KV-27DXRI, is pricey here at ¥338,000 (\$1,379.59) but includes a storage function that works like a TV phone directory and electronic calendar-memo. If you're so inclined the Sony digital set has enough memory to store 32 names and phone numbers as an electronic notepad, can store a 12-item schedule reminder, and automatically turns the set on at designated times for five different programs.

The picture tube is a fine-resolution Black Trinitron recently developed by Sony, using a comb filter to improve picture quality. The set circuitry has a digital scanner that converts conventional screen display by the Trinitron one-gun method to a non-interlace method by inserting extra scanning lines between pairs of incoming scanning lines. The effect is a display that has no flicker and virtually no discernible seams. That is especially useful in presenting displays of text, which this set is designed to do—it doubles as a videotext terminal.



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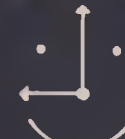
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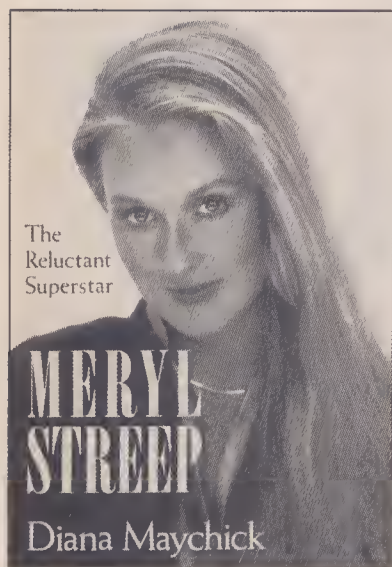
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Video Bookshelf

by George L. George



Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life

by Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnson

Drawing on 40 years of experience at the Disney studio, the authors combine a detailed description of animation techniques with spectacular illustrations from many Disney films. (Abbeville, N.Y.; \$29.95.)

Meryl Streep

by Diana Maychick

This intimate portrait is distinguished by the actress' uncommonly thoughtful approach to her roles, the deep emotional reserves she taps at will, and the commitment she brings to her craft. Streep clearly outlines how her strong per-

sonality carried her through early and often difficult stage experiences to a meteoric rise to stardom. (St. Martin's, N.Y.; \$12.95.)

Shock Value

by John Waters

Waters, the avant-garde director of such midnight classics as *Pink Flamingos* and *Polyester*, offers an unvarnished view of underground filmmaking in this hilarious autobiography. The author gleefully confers cult status on intentional bad taste, and reveals the style and substance of an explosive subculture. (Dell, N.Y.; \$9.95.)

The Films Of Roger Corman

by Ed Naha

Naha's informative biography liberally quotes the producer/director/showman, and paints a picture of a man

who relies on pragmatic solutions to the problems of producing respectable cinematic product on a tight budget. (Arco, N.Y.; \$9.95.)

The Hollywood History of World War II

by Robin Cross

In this wicked satire of Tinseltown's view of the "recent unpleasantness," Cross tags irreverent, side-splitting captions to stills picked from over 100 celebrated war movies, including Hitchcock's *Saboteur*, Sidney Franklin's *Mrs. Miniver*, and many others. (St. Martin's, N.Y.; \$7.95.)

Those Great Cowboy Sidekicks

by David Rothel

George "Gabby" Hayes, Andy Devine, Pat Buttram, and Fuzzy Knight are among the comic character actors fondly remembered as saddle pals of the cowboy stars. Bountifully-illustrated interviews evoke fond memories of the movies' unsophisticated past. (Scarecrow, Metuchen, N.J.; \$29.95.)

There Really Was A Hollywood

by Janet Leigh

Gifted with a sunny disposition and unlimited optimism, the star of *Psycho* and many other films emerges in her autobiography as a thoroughly likable person who never ceased to wonder about the lucky circumstances that brought a successful career and a generally happy life. (Doubleday, N.Y.; \$15.95.)

Charlie Chaplin's One-Man Show

by Dan Kamin

Chaplin's virtuosity as a pantomime artist is insightfully analyzed by Kamin, a professional mime himself. Chaplin's physical artistry, polished technique, and masterful mimicry are viewed as the foundation of his comedic genius. (Scarecrow, Metuchen, N.J.; \$29.50.)

OMNI's Screen Flights/Screen Fantasies

by Danny Peary

Science fiction cinema is explored from top to bottom in this ambitious study. Interviews with important filmmakers and scriptwriters define their concepts of the future and screen presentation from *Trip to the Moon* (Melies, 1903) to Peter Hyams' *2010*. (Doubleday, N.Y.; \$29.95/12.95.)

The Creature Features Movie Guide

by John Stanley

Over 3000 films are listed and assessed in this handy survey of a most popular genre. The author's perceptive reviews are explicitly worded in detailed plot synopses that pinpoint each film's characteristics to the letter. (Warner, N.Y.; \$7.95.)

Symphony For the Devil

by Philip Norman

Extensive research and an investigative approach stamp this definitive account of the Rolling Stones story. The charismatic figure of Mick Jagger dominates a complex, ambiguous scene. (Simon & Schuster, N.Y.; \$17.95.)

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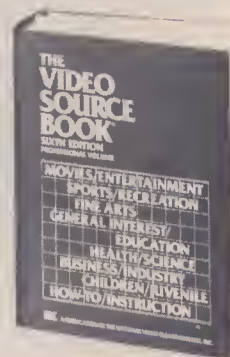
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People

Idol Chatter

by Lorenzo
Carcattera



Oh God, not again. This month, **George Burns** makes his third appearance as **God** on video with the release of *Oh God, You Devil!*

He'll also be touring with his act, hawking his paperback best-seller, *Dr. Burns' Prescription for Happiness*, negotiating another *God* sequel, and trying to avoid a few of his over-eager fans. "You never know when you're going to meet a fan," Burns says. "One morning I was driving to my office when a guy ran a

red light and smashed into the side of my car. The car was a mess and I was shaken up. I got out and asked him what he thought he was doing, running a light like that. He said, 'You're George Burns.' I said, 'I almost wasn't.' " Oh God, what a kiddie.

Charles Martin Smith, who has gone from the ugly little gnome in *American Graffiti* to the compassionate hero of *Never Cry Wolf* (both available on video), can be seen in *Starman*, **John Carpenter's** tale of an alien who lands on earth in the form of a once dead farmer (**Jeff Bridges**). In the movie, released on video this month, Martin costars as a government employee who will go to any lengths to talk to the creature. "I did the role for two reasons," he told us. "The first was to work with John Carpenter. The second was because I always wanted to smoke a cigar on camera. I've always thought people who smoke cigars


don't give a damn about anything. I like that an awful lot. Especially after all the picked-on characters I've played."

You could fill a video library with the films of **Harry Dean Stanton**. From *Farewell, My Lovely* (with **Robert Mitchum**) to *The Missouri Breaks*, *Escape from New York*, *One from the Heart*, and *Christine*, Harry has done them all. Now, for the first time in a 27-year acting career, Harry Dean Stanton can be seen in a starring role as **Sam Shepard's** *Paris, Texas* lands in video outlets this month. "It's the first movie I've made that I totally wanted to make," he says. "After 27 years of doing films I didn't want to make, I finally felt free. I now consider my prison term over." Another of the 58-year-old actor's 58 films, *Repo Man*, is also slowly finding its way onto everyone's must-see video list.

CBS/Fox is releasing *Two English Girls* later this month. The film, originally released theatrically in 1971, was restored last year by the late director **Francois Truffaut**, with a number of new scenes added. Truffaut would also be glad to know that a film biography of his idol **Alfred Hitchcock** begins preproduction work this month. The Tri-Star feature was spurred on by the amazing success Hitchcock's films enjoyed last year, both theatrically and on video (*Rear Window* and *Vertigo* led the revival). **Ernest Lehman** wrote the script which, surprisingly enough, is a mystery.

Is the world ready for this? **Burt Reynolds** and **Tom Selleck** have decided to

team up for a remake of the great **John Ford** western *My Darling Clementine*. "We're both eager to work together," says Reynolds, whose latest disaster, *Stick*, will be available on video in the next few weeks. "I love the guy even though he is breathing down my neck." While they wait for contract and script problems to be worked out, Reynolds goes home to Florida to rest up while Selleck watches his latest effort, *Runaway*, go video. **Kiss** lead singer **Gene Simmons** costars as a villain out to end the screen life of the hunk from Hawaii. Why did Simmons choose the role of second banana to Selleck rather than the lead in *Flashdance* which he turned down more than once? Simple. "I don't like disco movies and I didn't want all my fans to see me in a music movie," Simmons explained delicately. Now they can see him in this bomb.

Here and there: **Lee Marvin** returns to television (and later video) with a sequel to his 1967 hit *The Dirty Dozen*. Called *The Dirty Dozen: The Next Mission*, it will air on NBC the middle of the month and be available in stores ASAP. . . . **Arnold Schwarzenegger** begins work this month on *Terminator II* while his *Terminator* is selling as though videos were going out of business. . . . **JoBeth Williams**—on video in *Poltergeist*, *The Big Chill*, *Teachers*—goes to work this month on *Poltergeist II*. . . . **Goldie Hawn**, whose *Protocol* just reached the video stage, is looking to work with **Robert Redford**, whose last film *The Natural* was hardly that on video. 

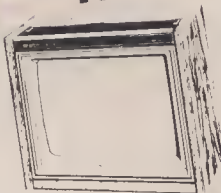
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Off the Air

The Last Word

Mad Mark

By Bob Brewin

The Federal Communications Commission, under the leadership of the aptly nicknamed "Mad Mark" Fowler, spent Reagan's first term in an orgy of what it termed "deregulation." With Reagan's reelection Fowler probably will have yet another four years to totally dismantle policy that has withstood the winds of political change for 50 years.

Under the Communications Act of 1934 the electromagnetic spectrum was viewed as an unseen but finite resource which licensees were allowed to use under a public trust for the public good. Fowler wants to change this basic tenet by turning the spectrum into just another commodity which can be bought or sold, with—he wants us to believe—few restrictions on the users. Unfortunately, as with other more concrete resources, there is only so much frequency space and Fowler's idea of deregulation isn't likely to spread it around much.

In fact, Fowler's philosophy is about as far from a public trust as you can get. It could best be summed up by the phrase "them's that have, get." Take what Fowler laughably calls the "deregulation" of the broadcast-

television business. Late last year the FCC voted to allow broadcasters to own 12 TV stations, a drastic increase from the current seven-station limit, as long as they did not hit more than 25 percent of the number of TV households in the country. How the public interest will be served by letting a handful of already well-established communications giants serve a quarter of the population is questionable. Couple this move with Fowler's warmest desire—withdrawal of the FCC from the licensing process, substituting an outright sale of channels—and you end up with a policy called "deregulation" that sounds more like "monopolization."

I have a better idea, one that is really deregulatory, and I challenge Fowler to take it up. Let anyone who wants to operate a television or radio station do so. Get the FCC completely out of business altogether. Make the playing field really even. Give the marketplace a totally free choice. If Fowler truly believes the government should not be in the business of licensing broadcasters, don't. But give everyone a chance.

I propose controlled anarchy—really easy thanks to the increasing ubiquitousness of the VCR. Every VCR is also a miniature TV transmitter. Instead of hooking the machine up to a TV, hook it instead to a signal booster, stick an antenna on top of the highest nearby spot, and start programming. Since all VCRs currently either send on Channels 3 or 4, this initially will cause a lot of interference on those

channels. But I'm sure Fowler's much-beloved marketplace will soon bring about the development of inexpensive RF modulators able to operate on any channel within the TV frequency band.

With the wide variety of prerecorded videotapes already in stores, this would immediately give the viewing audience something it has not had for years: true choice, not the "me too" programming mentality of the networks. (This will admittedly cause some copyright problems. Jack Valenti will just have to handle that.) Just think, *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* will be available to a wide viewing audience, not just to people who own a VCR.


Of course there will probably be colossal interference problems, particularly once these new broadcasters start to get into a power war. Since power restrictions will be removed, I envision the building of mega-power TV stations with an output so strong anyone within a mile of the transmitter will be able to roast a turkey without having to go to the bother of buying a microwave oven. But again, the marketplace will take care of this problem: these new broadcasters will end up buying the competitors off to have a clear channel.

I also propose doing the same thing for the cable-TV business, which Fowler should really love since he believes cities have no busi-

ness engaging in almost any kind of cable regulation. Throw out the cable franchises! (They're about the most useless contracts around anyway.) If Joe's Cable Co. wants to wire the Soho section of Manhattan (an area long ignored by the Time Inc. subsidiary with the franchise), let him do it. Neighborhoods in cities small and large, little or ill-served by the cable giants, could start their own mini cable systems. This competition just might make the existing cable systems try setting up something they ignore today: customer-service departments, which would do a lot for the unemployment problem.

While we're at it, let's get rid of all the foolish laws which restrict the right of people to receive whatever is floating around in the spectrum. Anyone anywhere will be able to receive any signal he wants, MDA, ITFS, cable, satellite. This will bring about a marketplace solution to the misnamed "pirate" problem: people who want to protect the integrity of their signal will spend the money to do so, rather than clogging up the court system with what amounts to harassment cases.

To protect life, limb, and public safety, aero, police, fire, and weather frequencies would be inviolate turf. Everything else will be open. This modest plan, if adopted, will really bring about the new era in communications Fowler says he wants.

How about it Mark? 

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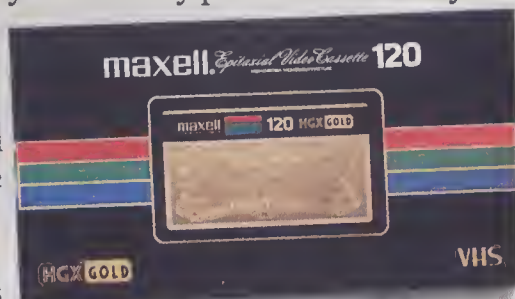
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